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A decorative border of stylized flowers and leaves runs along the top and left sides of the cover. The flowers are small, five-petaled, and have a dark center. The leaves are dark and pointed. The border is composed of several thin, dark lines that weave through the flowers and leaves.

Brownings'
Love Poems

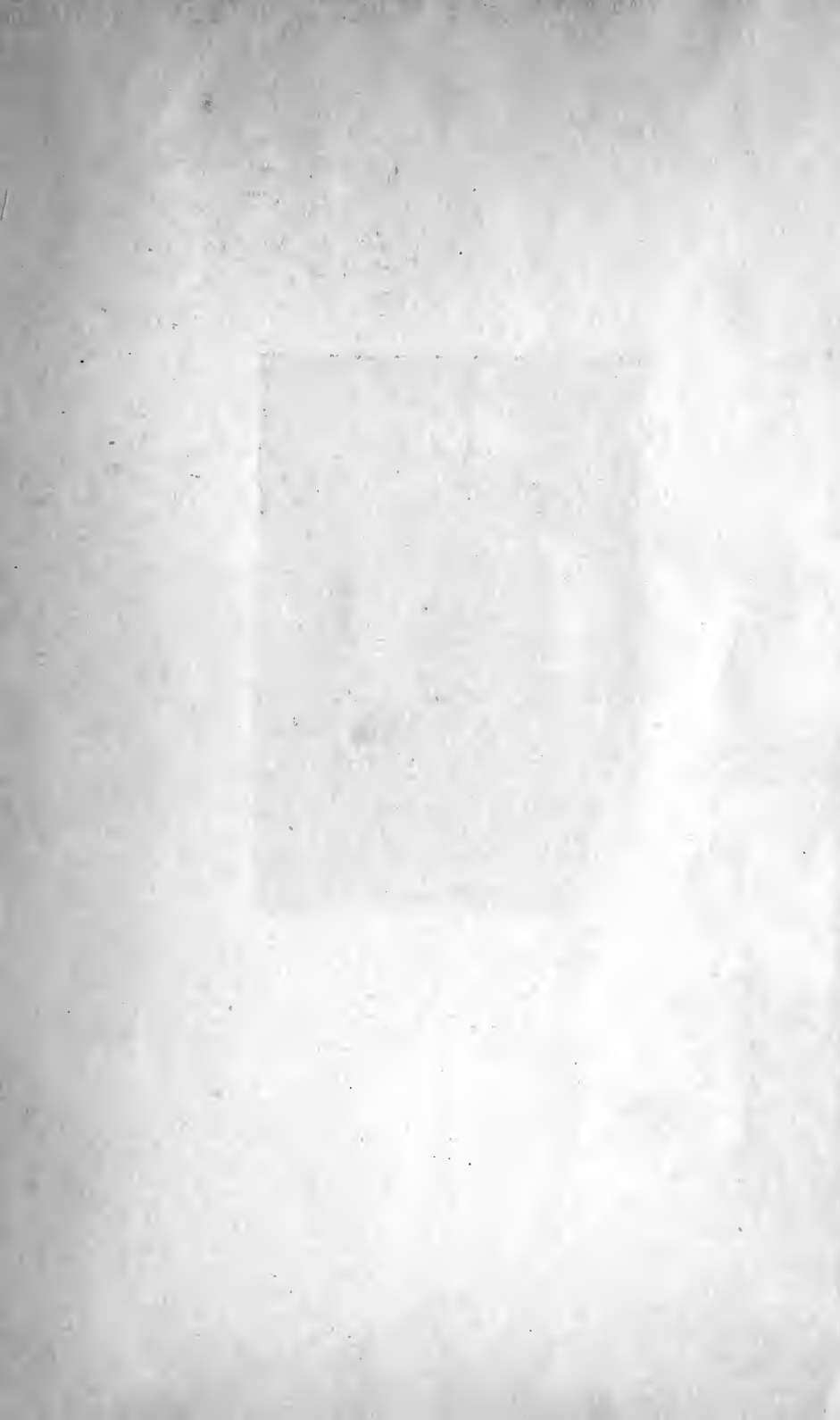


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Book L6H3

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LOVE POEMS





Alfred Browning.

LOVE POEMS

FROM THE WORKS OF

ROBERT BROWNING

AND

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

SELECTED AND ARRANGED

BY ETHEL HARRIS

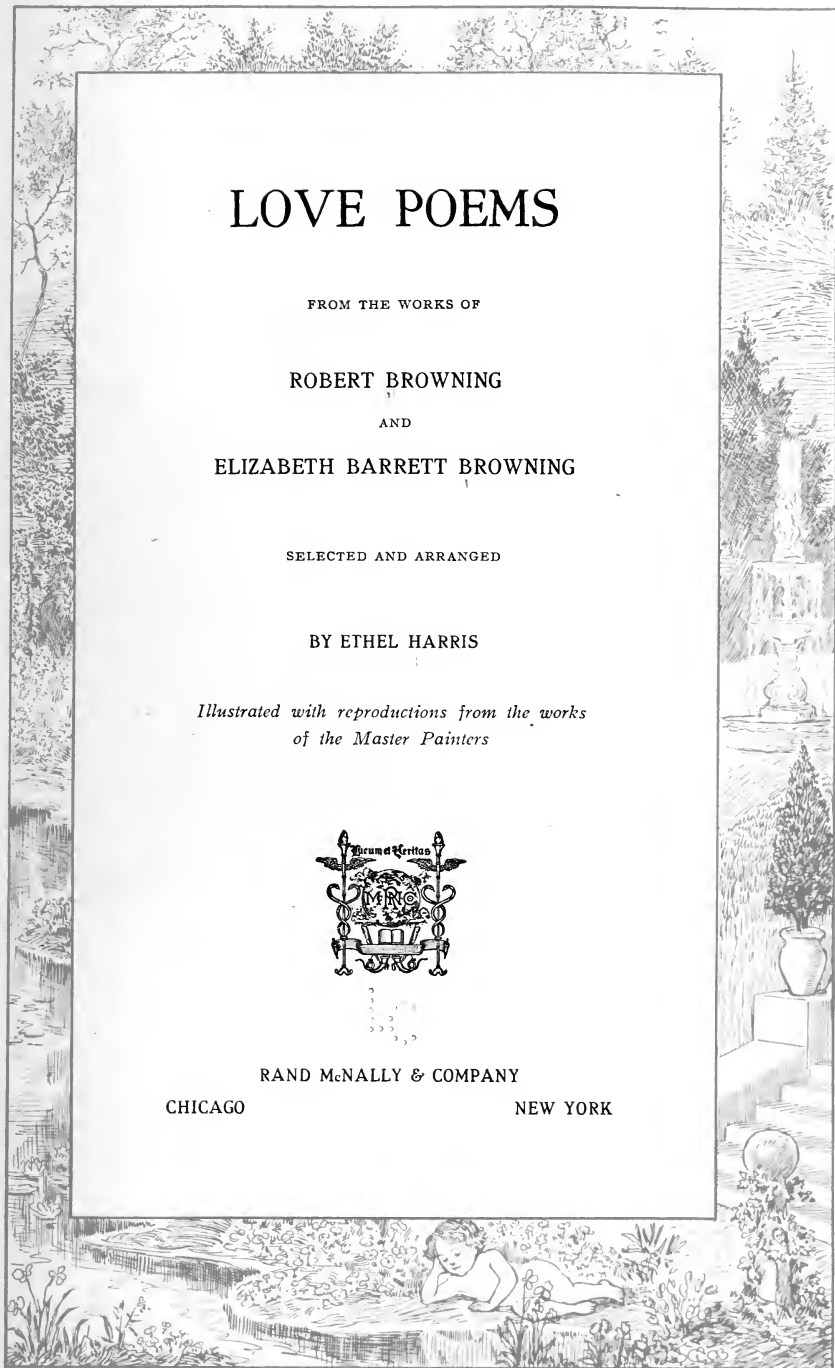
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CHICAGO

NEW YORK



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The Rand-McNally Press
Chicago

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LOVE CHILLED

JEAN AUBERT

*"Once his love grown chill,
Mine may strive."*



From Dramatic Lyrics

IN A YEAR

I.

NEVER any more,
While I live,
Need I hope to see his face
As before.
Once his love grown chill,
Mine may strive:
Bitterly we re-embrace,
Single still.

II.

Was it something said,
Something done,
Vexed him? was it touch of hand,
Turn of head?
Strange! that very way
Love begun:
I as little understand
Love's decay.

III.

When I sewed or drew,
I recall
How he looked as if I sung,
—Sweetly too.
If I spoke a word,
First of all
Up his cheek the color sprung,
Then he heard.

IV.

Sitting by my side,
At my feet,
So he breathed but air I breathed,
Satisfied!
I, too, at love's brim
Touched the sweet:
I would die if death bequeathed
Sweet to him.

V.

"Speak, I love thee best!"
He exclaimed:
"Let thy love my own foretell!"
I confessed:
"Clasp my heart on thine
"Now unblamed,
"Since upon thy soul as well
"Hangeth mine!"

VI.

Was it wrong to own,
Being truth?
Why should all the giving prove
His alone?
I had wealth and ease,
Beauty, youth:
Since my lover gave me love,
I gave these.

VII.

That was all I meant,
—To be just,
And the passion I had raised,
To content.

Since he chose to change
Gold for dust,
If I gave him what he praised
Was it strange ?

VIII.

Would he loved me yet,
On and on,
While I found some way undreamed
—Paid my debt!
Gave more life and more,
Till, all gone,
He should smile "She never seemed
"Mine before.

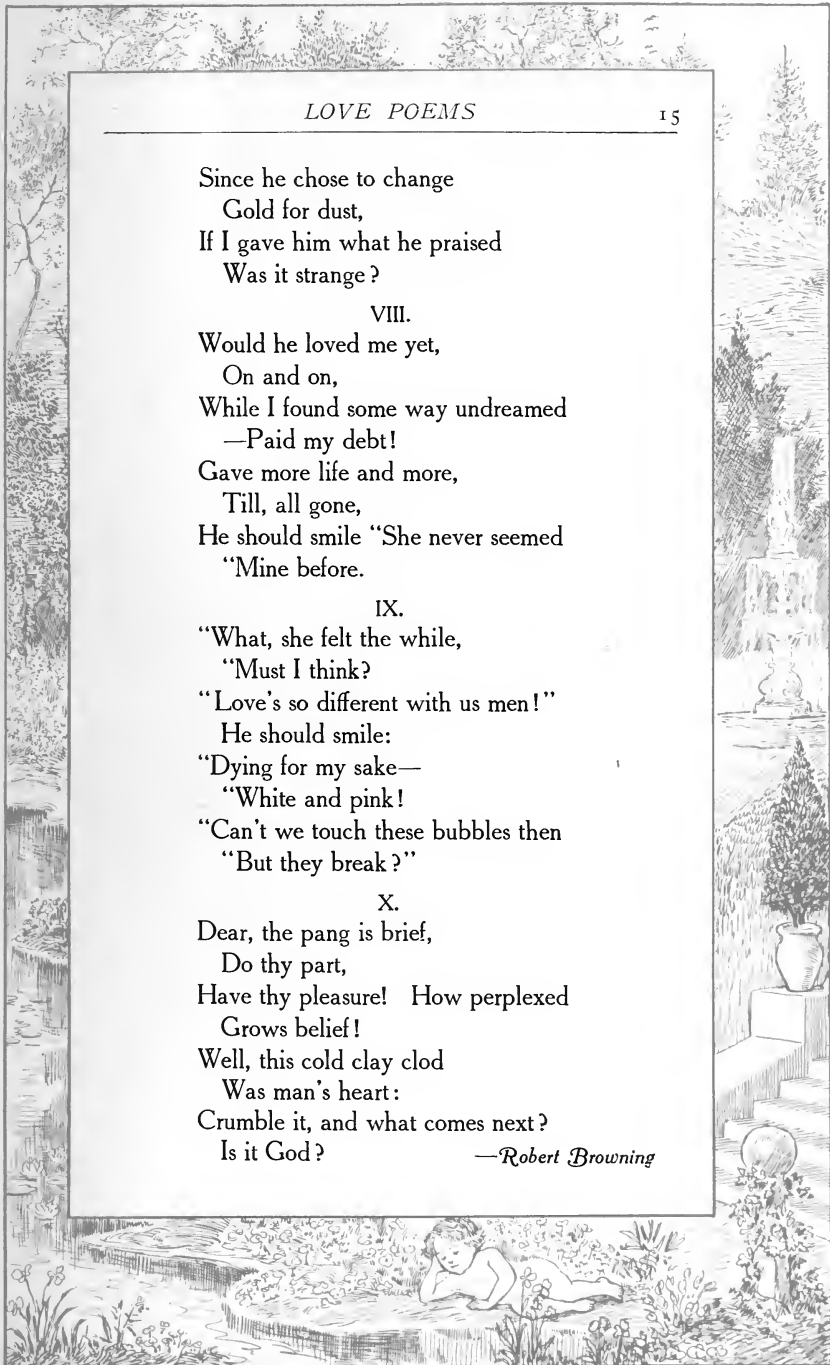
IX.

"What, she felt the while,
"Must I think?
"Love's so different with us men!"
He should smile:
"Dying for my sake—
"White and pink!
"Can't we touch these bubbles then
"But they break?"

X.

Dear, the pang is brief,
Do thy part,
Have thy pleasure! How perplexed
Grows belief!
Well, this cold clay clod
Was man's heart:
Crumble it, and what comes next?
Is it God?

—Robert Browning





DECLARATION OF LOVE

F. SOULACROIX

“‘Yes,’ I answered you last night;
‘No,’ this morning, sir, I say.”

The Lady's "Yes"

I.

"YES," I answered you last night ;
"No," this morning, sir, I say :
Colors seen by candle-light
Will not look the same by day.

II.

When the viols played their best,
Lamps above and laughs below.
Love me sounded like a jest,
Fit for *yes* or fit for *no*.

III.

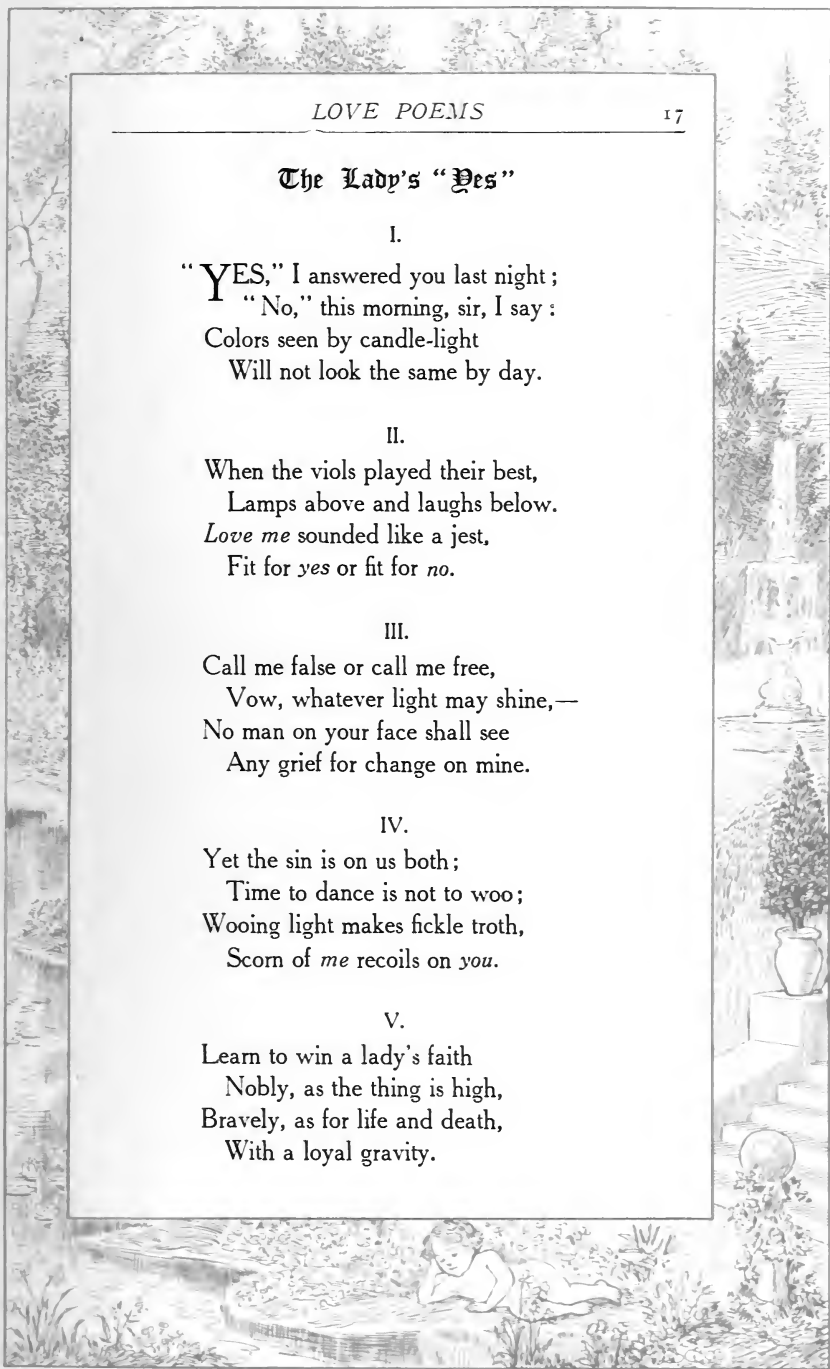
Call me false or call me free,
Vow, whatever light may shine,—
No man on your face shall see
Any grief for change on mine.

IV.

Yet the sin is on us both ;
Time to dance is not to woo ;
Wooing light makes fickle troth,
Scorn of *me* recoils on *you*.

V.

Learn to win a lady's faith
Nobly, as the thing is high,
Bravely, as for life and death,
With a loyal gravity.



VI.

Lead her from the festive boards,
Point her to the starry skies;
Guard her, by your truthful words,
Pure from courtship's flatteries.

VII.

By your truth she shall be true,
Ever true, as wives of yore;
And her *yes* once said to you,
SHALL be *Yes* forevermore.

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

From Dramatic Lyrics

LIFE IN A LOVE

ESCAPE me ?

Never—

Beloved !

While I am I, and you are you,

So long as the world contains us both,

Me the loving and you the loth,

While the one eludes, must the other pursue,

My life is a fault at last, I fear:

It seems too much like a fate, indeed !

Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed.

But what if I fail of my purpose here?

It is but to keep the nerves at strain,

To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,

And, baffled, get up and begin again,—

So the chace takes up one's life, that's all.

While, look but once from your farthest bound

At me so deep in the dust and dark,

No sooner the old hope goes to ground

Than a new one, straight to the self-same mark,

I shape me—

Ever

Removed !

—Robert Browning





ANGIOLINE

E. VON BLAAS

*"Love me with thine open youth
In its frank surrender."*

A Man's Requirements

I.

LOVE me, Sweet, with all thou art,
Feeling, thinking, seeing ;
Love me in the lightest part,
Love me in full being.

II.

Love me with thine open youth
In its frank surrender ;
With the vowing of thy mouth,
With its silence tender.

III.

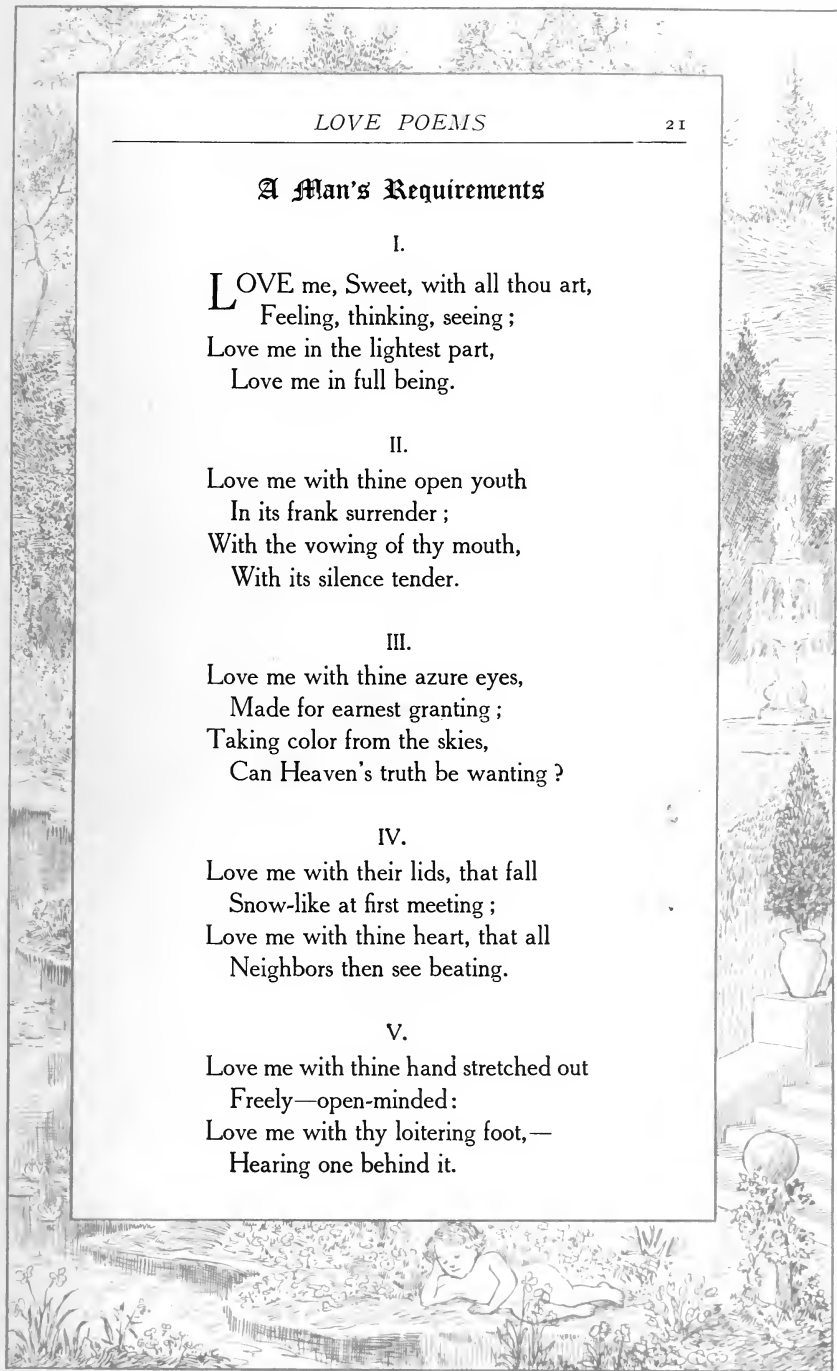
Love me with thine azure eyes,
Made for earnest granting ;
Taking color from the skies,
Can Heaven's truth be wanting ?

IV.

Love me with their lids, that fall
Snow-like at first meeting ;
Love me with thine heart, that all
Neighbors then see beating.

V.

Love me with thine hand stretched out
Freely—open-minded :
Love me with thy loitering foot,—
Hearing one behind it.



VI.

Love me with thy voice, that turns
Sudden faint above me ;
Love me with thy blush that burns
When I murmur *Love me !*

VII.

Love me with thy thinking soul,
Break it to love-sighing ;
Love me with thy thoughts that roll
On through living—dying.

VIII.

Love me in thy gorgeous airs,
When the world has crowned thee ;
Love me, kneeling at thy prayers,
With the angels round thee.

IX.

Love me pure, as musers do,
Up the woodlands shady:
Love me gayly, fast and true,
As a winsome lady.

X.

Through all hopes that keep us brave,
Farther off or nigher,
Love me for the house and grave,
And for something higher.

XI.

Thus, if thou wilt prove me, Dear,
Woman's love no fable,
I will love *thee*—half a year—
As a man is able.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning

That Day

I.

I STAND by the river where both of us stood,
And there is but one shadow to darken the flood;
And the path leading to it, where both used to pass,
Has the step of but one, to take dew from the grass,—
One forlorn since that day.

II.

The flowers of the margin are many to see;
None stoops at my bidding to pluck them for me.
The bird in the alder sings loudly and long,—
My low sound of weeping disturbs not his song,
As thy vow did, that day.

III.

I stand by the river, I think of the vow;
Oh, calm as the place is, vow-breaker, be thou!
I leave the flower growing, the bird unproved;
Would I trouble *thee* rather than *them*, my beloved,—
And my lover that day?

IV.

Go, be sure of my love, by that treason forgiven;
Of my prayers, by the blessings they win thee from
Heaven;
Of my grief—(guess the length of the sword by the
sheath's)
By the silence of life, more pathetic than death's!
Go,—be clear of that day!
—Elizabeth Barrett Browning





IMPORTUNATE TROUBADOUR

F. ANDREOTTI

*"Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—
All were for me in the kiss of one girl."*

From Asolando: Fancies and Facts

SUMMUM BONUM

ALL the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag
of one bee :

All the wonder and wealth of the mine in
the heart of one gem :

In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine
of the sea :

Breath and bloom, shade and shine,—wonder,
wealth, and—how far above them—

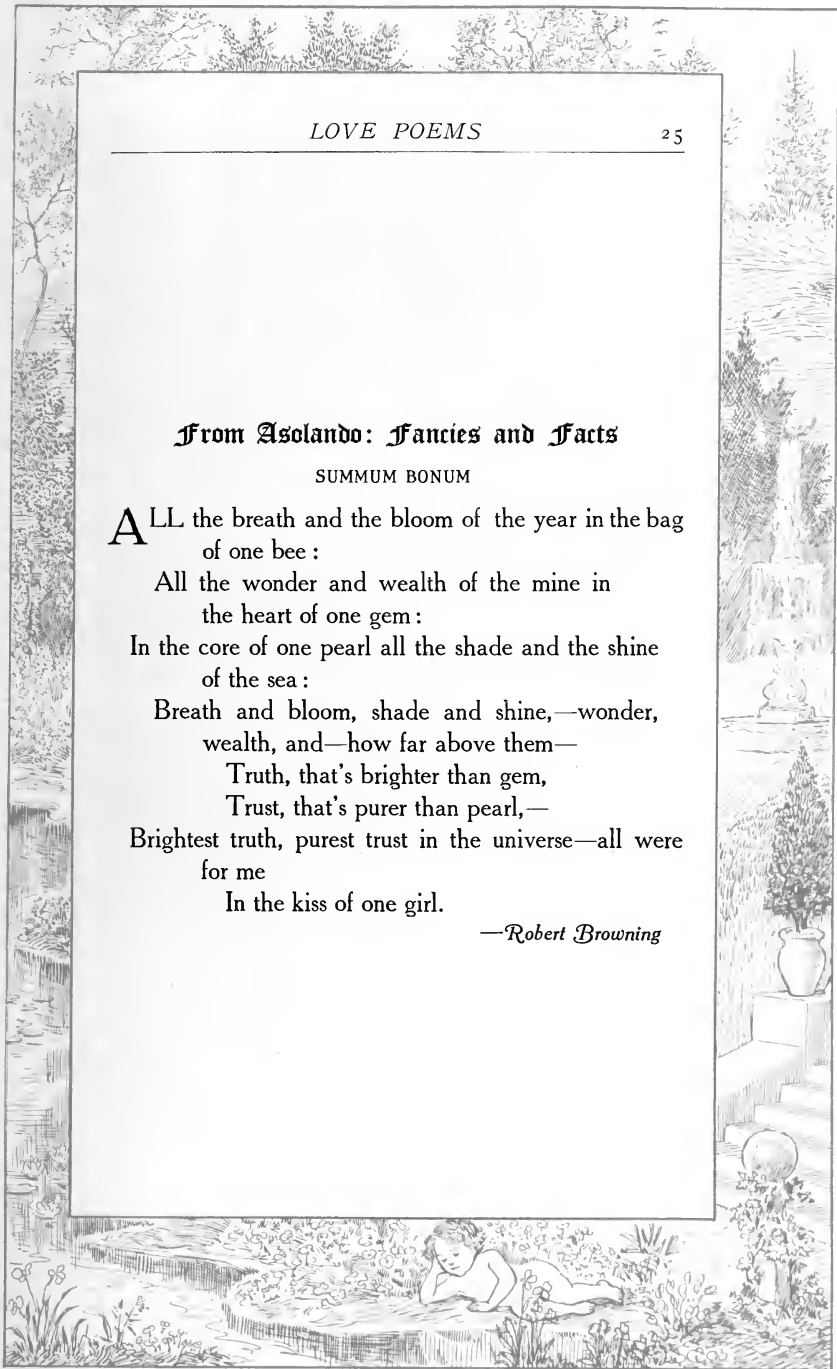
Truth, that's brighter than gem,

Trust, that's purer than pearl,—

Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were
for me

In the kiss of one girl.

—*Robert Browning*





INNOCENCE

J. B. GREUZE

*"Is she not pure gold, my mistress?
Holds earth aught—speak truth—above her?"*

From Dramatic Lyrics

SONG

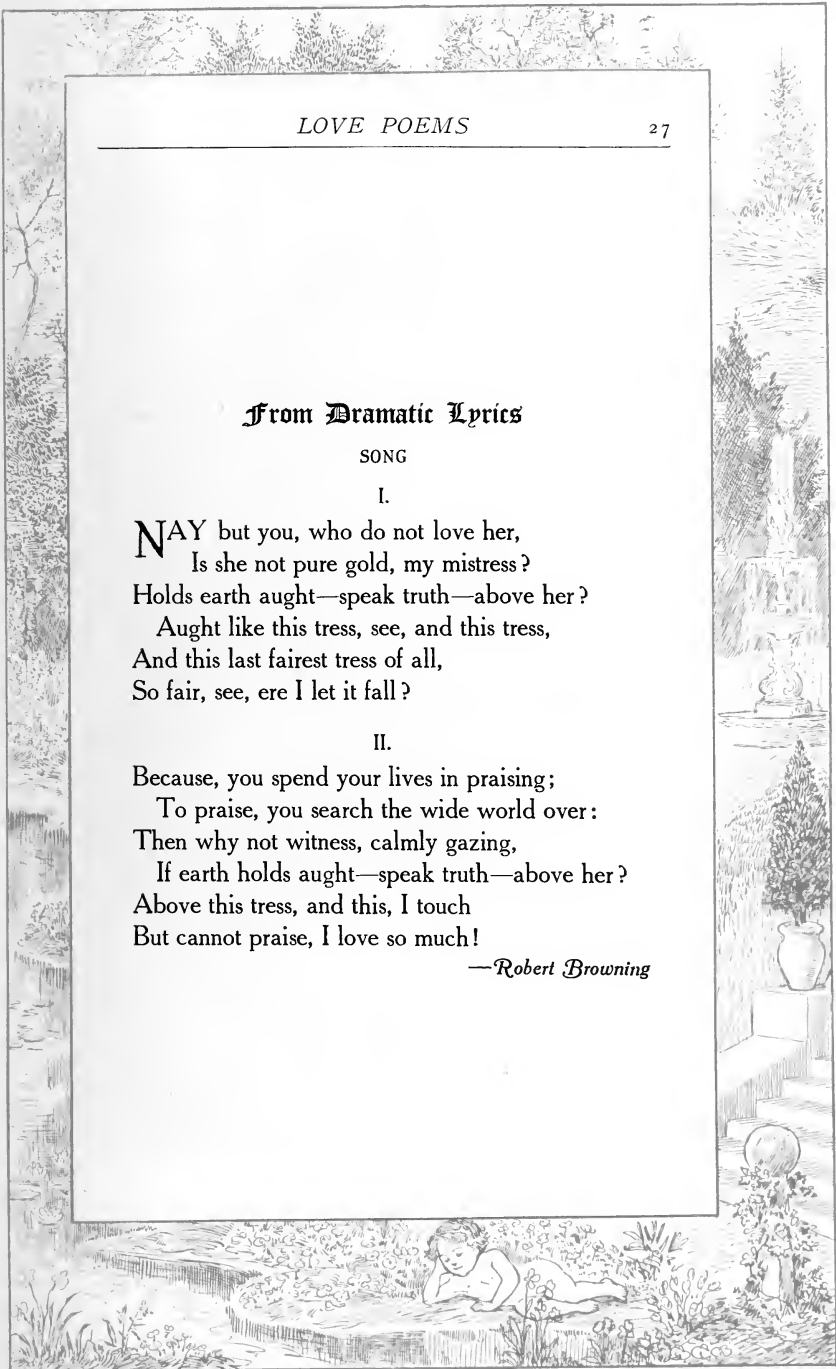
I.

NAY but you, who do not love her,
Is she not pure gold, my mistress?
Holds earth aught—speak truth—above her?
Aught like this tress, see, and this tress,
And this last fairest tress of all,
So fair, see, ere I let it fall?

II.

Because, you spend your lives in praising;
To praise, you search the wide world over:
Then why not witness, calmly gazing,
If earth holds aught—speak truth—above her?
Above this tress, and this, I touch
But cannot praise, I love so much!

—Robert Browning





WILD ROSE

OTTO LINGNER

*"Till God's own smile came out:
That was thy face!"*

From The Two Poets of Croisic

SELECTION

I.

SUCH a starved bank of moss
Till that May-morn,
Blue ran the flash across:
Violets were born!

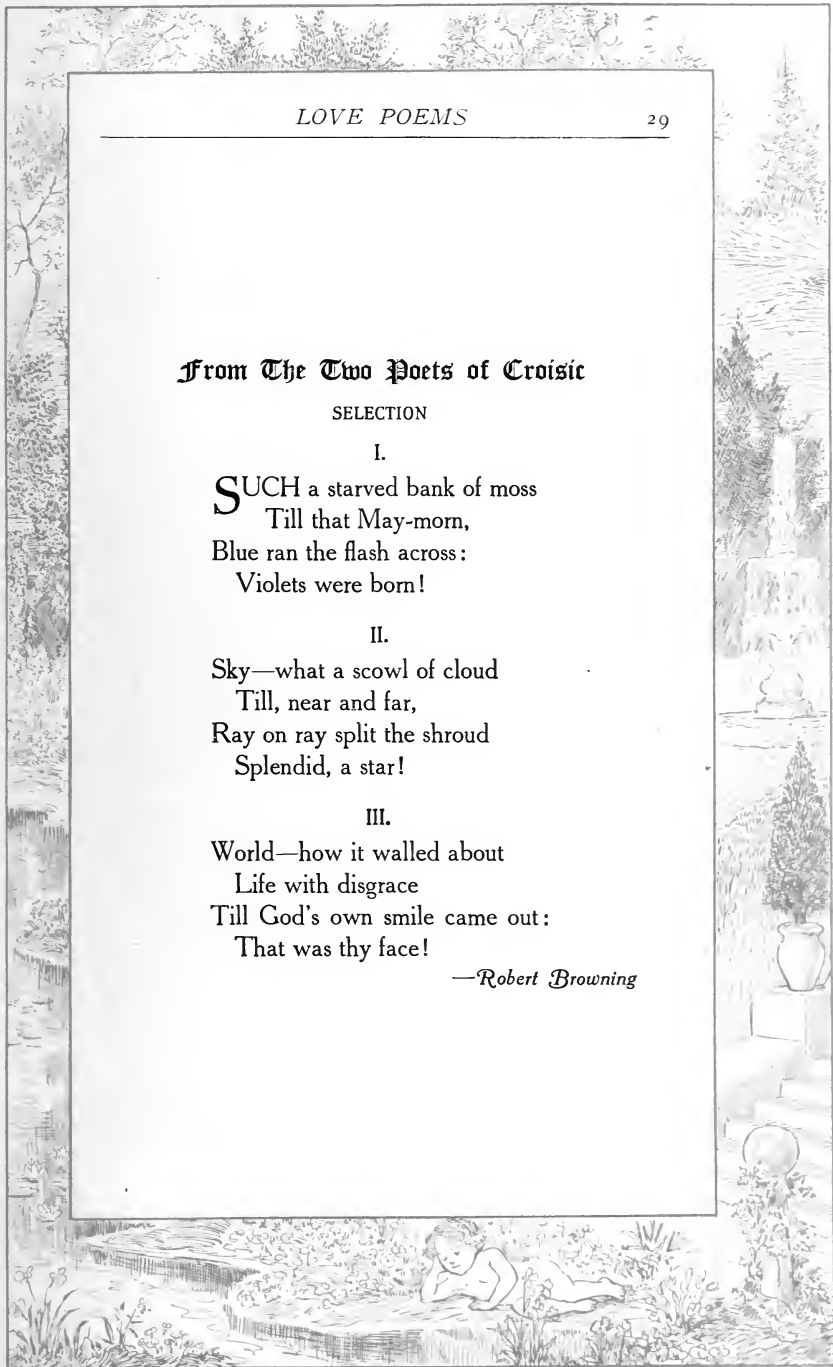
II.

Sky—what a scowl of cloud
Till, near and far,
Ray on ray split the shroud
Splendid, a star!

III.

World—how it walled about
Life with disgrace
Till God's own smile came out:
That was thy face!

—Robert Browning



From Last Poems

MY HEART AND I

I.

ENOUGH! we're tired, my heart and I.
We sit beside the headstone thus,
And wish that name were carved for us.
The moss reprints more tenderly
The hard types of the mason's knife,
As heaven's sweet life renews earth's life
With which we're tired, my heart and I.

II.

You see we're tired, my heart and I.
We dealt with books, we trusted men,
And in our own blood drenched the pen,
As if such colors could not fly.
We walked too straight for fortune's end,
We loved too true to keep a friend;
At last we're tired, my heart and I.

III.

How tired we feel, my heart and I!
We seem of no use in the world;
Our fancies hang gray and uncurled
About men's eyes indifferently;
Our voice which thrilled you so, will let
You sleep; our tears are only wet:
What do we here, my heart and I?

IV.

So tired, so tired, my heart and I!
It was not thus in that old time
When Ralph sat with me 'neath the lime
To watch the sunset from the sky.

"Dear love, you're looking tired," he said;
I, smiling at him, shook my head:
'Tis now we're tired, my heart and I.

V.

So tired, so tired, my heart and I!
Though now none takes me on his arm
To fold me close and kiss me warm
Till each quick breath end in a sigh
Of happy languor. Now, alone,
We lean upon this graveyard stone,
Uncheered, unloved, my heart and I.

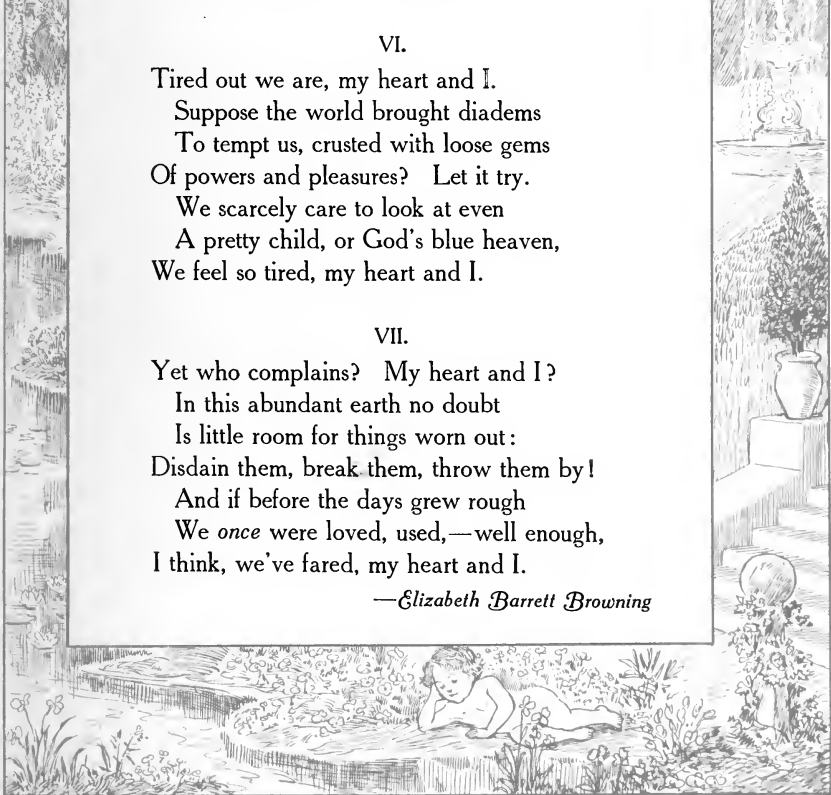
VI.

Tired out we are, my heart and I.
Suppose the world brought diadems
To tempt us, crusted with loose gems
Of powers and pleasures? Let it try.
We scarcely care to look at even
A pretty child, or God's blue heaven,
We feel so tired, my heart and I.

VII.

Yet who complains? My heart and I?
In this abundant earth no doubt
Is little room for things worn out:
Disdain them, break them, throw them by!
And if before the days grew rough
We *once* were loved, used,—well enough,
I think, we've fared, my heart and I.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning



Change Upon Change

I.

FIVE months ago the stream did flow,
The lilies bloomed within the sedge,
And we were lingering to and fro,
Where none will track thee in this snow,
Along the stream, beside the hedge.
Ah, Sweet, be free to love and go!
For if I do not hear thy foot,
The frozen river is as mute,
The flowers have dried down to the root:
And why, since these be changed since May,
Shouldst *thou* change less than *they*?

II.

And slow, slow as the winter snow
The tears have drifted to mine eyes;
And my poor cheeks, five months ago
Set blushing at thy praises so,
Put paleness on for a disguise.
Ah, Sweet, be free to praise and go!
For if my face is turned too pale,
It was thine oath that first did fail,—
It was thy love proved false and frail,—
And why, since these be changed enow,
Should *I* change less than *thou*?
—Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Love

WE cannot live, except thus mutually
We alternate, aware or unaware,
The reflex act of life: and when we bear
Our virtue outward most impulsively,
Most full of invocation, and to be
Most instantly compellant, certes there
We live most life, whoever breathes most air
And counts his dying years by sun and sea.
But when a soul, by choice and conscience, doth
Throw out her full force on another soul,
The conscience and the concentration both
Make mere life, Love. For Life in perfect whole
And aim consummated, is Love in sooth,
As Nature's magnet-heat rounds pole with pole.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning



YOUTH

J. F. BALLAVOINE

*"If one could have that little head of hers
Painted upon a background of pale gold."*

From Dramatis Personae

A FACE

IF one could have that little head of hers
Painted upon a background of pale gold,
Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers!

No shade encroaching on the matchless mold
Of those two lips, which should be opening soft

In the pure profile; not as when she laughs,
For that spoils all: but rather as if aloft

Yon hyacinth, she loves so, leaned its staff's
Burthen of honey-colored buds to kiss
And capture 'twixt the lips apart for this.

Then her lithe neck, three fingers might surround,
How it should waver on the pale gold ground
Up to the fruit-shaped, perfect chin it lifts!

I know, Correggio loves to mass, in rifts
Of heaven, his angel faces, orb on orb
Breaking its outline, burning shades absorb:

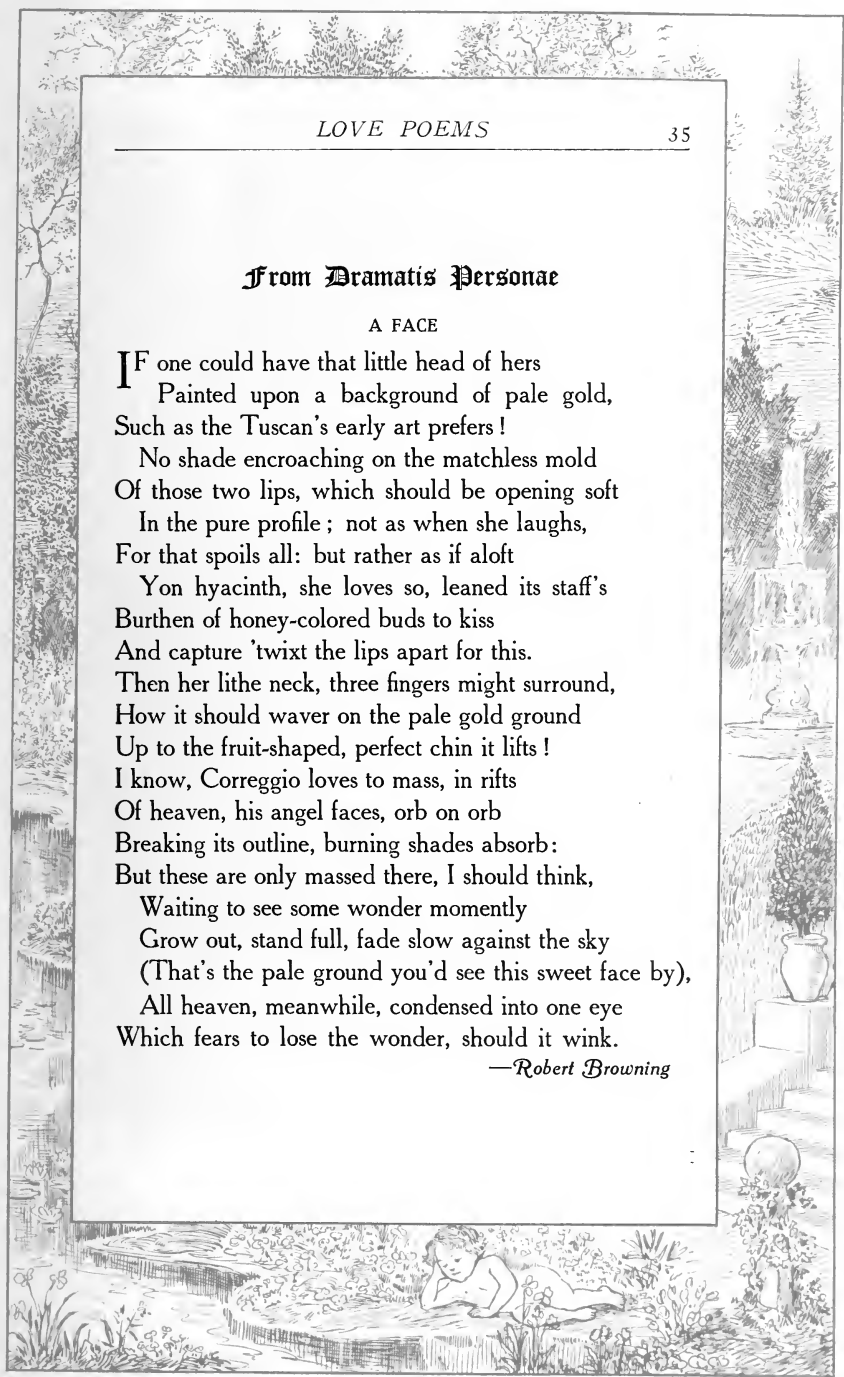
But these are only massed there, I should think,

Waiting to see some wonder momentarily

Grow out, stand full, fade slow against the sky
(That's the pale ground you'd see this sweet face by),

All heaven, meanwhile, condensed into one eye
Which fears to lose the wonder, should it wink.

—Robert Browning





LIFE AND LOVE

G. F. WATTS

*"So, when Life looked upward, being
Warmed and breathed on from above."*

Life and Love

I.

FAST this Life of mine was dying,
Blind already and calm as death,
Snowflakes on her bosom lying
Scarcely heaving with her breath.

II.

Love came by, and having known her
In a dream of fabled lands,
Gently stooped, and laid upon her
Mystic chrism of holy hands ;

III.

Drew his smile across her folded
Eyelids, as the swallow dips ;
Breathed as finely as the cold did
Through the locking of her lips.

IV.

So, when Life looked upward, being
Warmed and breathed on from above,
What sight could she have for seeing,
Evermore . . . but only LOVE ?
—Elizabeth Barrett Browning



A Woman's Shortcomings

I.

SHE has laughed as softly as if she sighed,
She has counted six, and over,
Of a purse well filled and a heart well tried—
Oh, each a worthy lover!
They "give her time;" for her soul must slip
Where the world has set the grooving;
She will lie to none with her fair red lip:
But love seeks truer loving.

II.

She trembles her fan in a sweetness dumb,
As her thoughts were beyond recalling,
With a glance for *one*, and a glance for *some*,
From her eyelids rising and falling;
Speaks common words with a blushful air,
Hears bold words, unreprieving;
But her silence says—what she never will swear—
And love seeks better loving.

III.

Go, lady, lean to the night-guitar
And drop a smile to the bringer;
Then smile as sweetly when he is far,
At the voice of an in-door singer.
Bask tenderly beneath tender eyes;
Glance lightly, on their removing;
And join new vows to old perjuries—
But dare not call it loving.

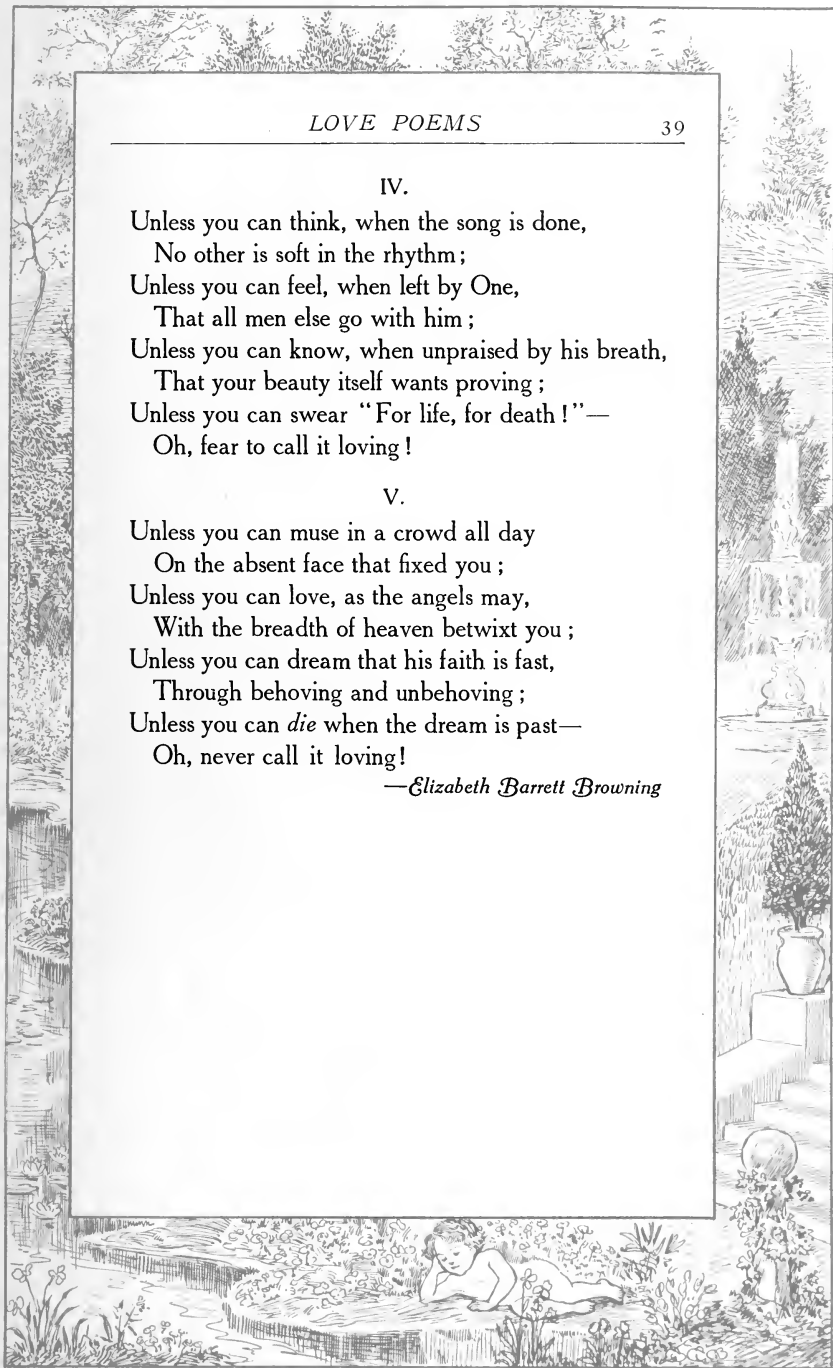
IV.

Unless you can think, when the song is done,
No other is soft in the rhythm ;
Unless you can feel, when left by One,
That all men else go with him ;
Unless you can know, when unpraised by his breath,
That your beauty itself wants proving ;
Unless you can swear "For life, for death !" —
Oh, fear to call it loving !

V.

Unless you can muse in a crowd all day
On the absent face that fixed you ;
Unless you can love, as the angels may,
With the breadth of heaven betwixt you ;
Unless you can dream that his faith is fast,
Through behoving and unbehoving ;
Unless you can *die* when the dream is past —
Oh, never call it loving !

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*





CANAL OF THE CINDECCA, VENICE

"Past we glide, and past, and past!"

W. C. STANFIELD

From Dramatic Romances

IN A GONDOLA

He Sings

I.

PAST we glide, and past, and past !
 What's that poor Agnese doing
 Where they make the shutters fast ?
 Gray Zanobi's just a-wooing
 To his couch the purchased bride :
 Past we glide !

II.

Past we glide, and past, and past !
 Why's the Pucci Palace flaring
 Like a beacon to the blast ?
 Guests by hundreds, not one caring
 If the dear host's neck were wried :
 Past we glide !

She Sings

I.

The moth's kiss, first !
 Kiss me as if you made believe
 You were not sure, this eve
 How my face, your flower, had pursed
 Its petals up ; so, here and there
 You brush it, till I grow aware
 Who wants me, and wide ope I burst.

II.

The bee's kiss, now !
Kiss me as if you entered gay
My heart at some noonday,
A bud that dares not disallow
The claim, so all is rendered up,
And passively its shattered cup
Over your head to sleep I bow.

—*Robert Browning*

From Dramatic Lyrics

THE LOST MISTRESS

I.

ALL'S over, then: does truth sound bitter
As one at first believes?
Hark, 'tis the sparrows' good-night twitter
About your cottage eaves!

II.

And the leaf-buds on the vine are woolly,
I noticed that, to-day;
One day more bursts them open fully
—You know the red turns gray.

III.

To-morrow we meet the same then, dearest?
May I take your hand in mine?
Mere friends are we—well, friends the merest
Keep much that I resign:

IV.

For each glance of the eye so bright and black,
Though I keep with heart's endeavor,—
Your voice, when you wish the snowdrops back,
Though it stay in my soul for ever! —

V.

Yet I will but say what mere friends say,
Or only a thought stronger;
I will hold your hand but as long as all may,
Or so very little longer!

—Robert Browning





LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES

*“With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.”*

From Dramatic Lyrics

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

I.

WHERE the quiet-colored end of evening smiles,
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—
Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

II.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
Into one)
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,
Twelve abreast.

III.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone—
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

IV.

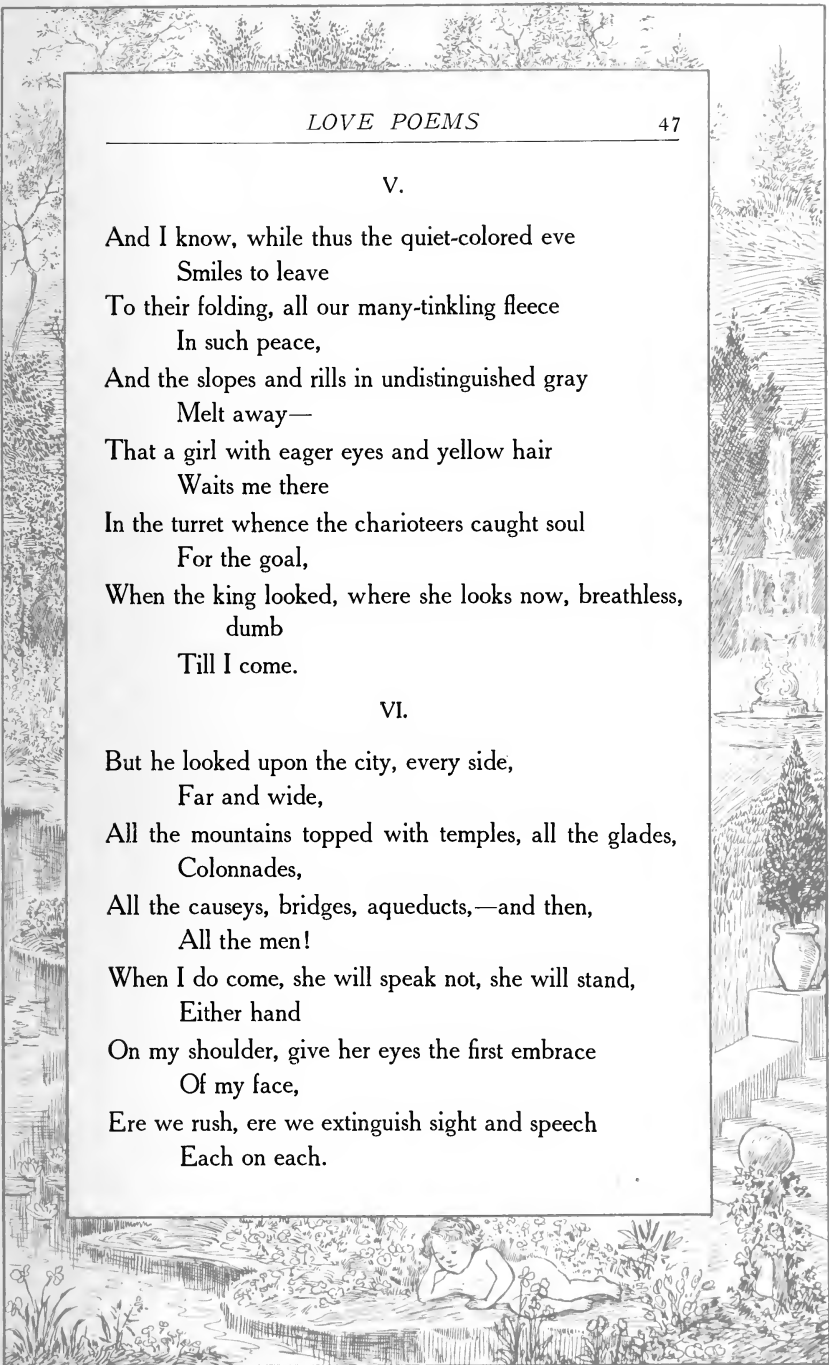
Now,—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks—
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

V.

And I know, while thus the quiet-colored eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
Melt away—
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless,
dumb
Till I come.

VI.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades,
Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.



VII.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
 South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
 As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
 Gold, of course.
Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!
 Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
 Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
 Love is best.

—*Robert Browning*

A Denial

I.

WE have met late—it is too late to meet,
O friend, not more than friend!
Death's forecome shroud is tangled round my feet,
And if I step or stir, I touch the end.

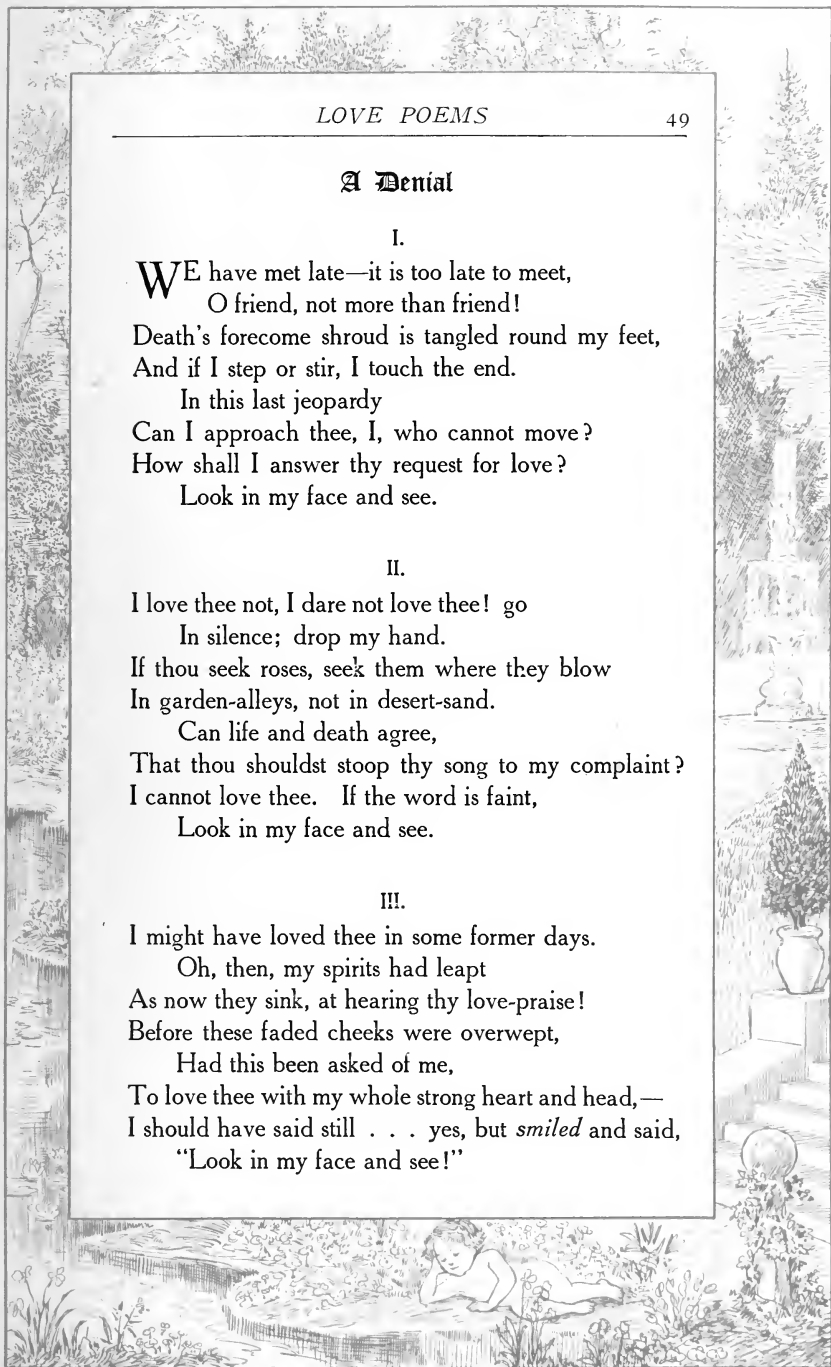
In this last jeopardy
Can I approach thee, I, who cannot move?
How shall I answer thy request for love?
Look in my face and see.

II.

I love thee not, I dare not love thee! go
In silence; drop my hand.
If thou seek roses, seek them where they blow
In garden-alleys, not in desert-sand.
Can life and death agree,
That thou shouldst stoop thy song to my complaint?
I cannot love thee. If the word is faint,
Look in my face and see.

III.

I might have loved thee in some former days.
Oh, then, my spirits had leapt
As now they sink, at hearing thy love-praise!
Before these faded cheeks were overwept,
Had this been asked of me,
To love thee with my whole strong heart and head,—
I should have said still . . . yes, but *smiled* and said,
“Look in my face and see!”



IV.

But now . . . God sees me, God, who took my
heart

And drowned it in life's surge.

In all your wide warm earth I have no part—

A light song overcomes me like a dirge,

Could Love's great harmony

The saints keep step to when their bonds are loose,

Not weigh me down? am I a wife to choose?

Look in my face and see—

V.

While I behold, as plain as one who dreams,

Some woman of full worth,

Whose voice, as cadenced as a silver stream's,

Shall prove the fountain-soul which sends it forth;

One younger, more thought-free

And fair and gay, than I, thou must forget,

With brighter eyes than these . . . which are not

wet . . .

Look in my face and see!

VI.

So farewell thou, whom I have known too late

To let thee come so near.

Be counted happy while men call thee great,

And one beloved woman feels thee dear!—

Not I!—that cannot be.

I am lost, I am changed,—I must go farther, where

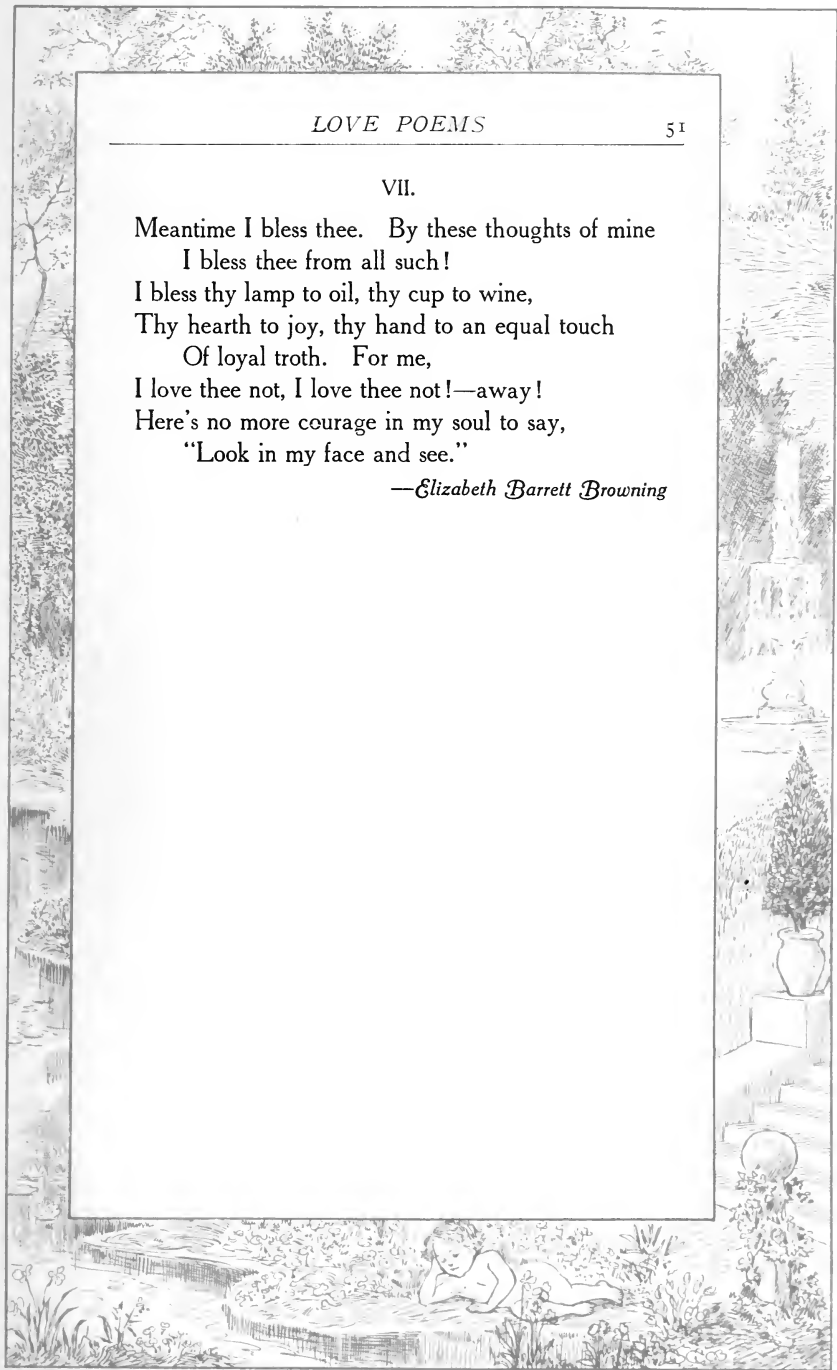
The change shall take me worse, and no one dare

Look in my face and see.

VII.

Meantime I bless thee. By these thoughts of mine
I bless thee from all such!
I bless thy lamp to oil, thy cup to wine,
Thy hearth to joy, thy hand to an equal touch
Of loyal troth. For me,
I love thee not, I love thee not!—away!
Here's no more courage in my soul to say,
“Look in my face and see.”

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*





YOUNG LOVE

R. COLLIN

*"Round us the wild creatures, overhead the trees,
Underfoot the moss-tracks,—life and love with these!"*

From Ferishtah's Fancies

SELECTION

ROUND us the wild creatures, overhead the trees,
Underfoot the moss-tracks,—life and love with
these!

I to wear a fawn-skin, thou to dress in flowers:
All the long lone Summer-day, that greenwood life of
ours!

Rich-pavilioned, rather,—still the world without,—
Inside—gold-roofed, silk-walled silence round about!
Queen it thou on purple,—I, at watch and ward
Couched beneath the columns, gaze, thy slave, love's
guard!

So, for us no world? Let throngs press thee to me!
Up and down amid men, heart by heart fare we!
Welcome squalid vesture, harsh voice, hateful face!
God is soul, souls I and thou: with souls should souls
have place.

—*Robert Browning*

From Dramatis Personae

JAMES LEE'S WIFE

IV —ALONG THE BEACH

IV.

O LOVE, Love, no, Love! not so, indeed!
You were just weak earth, I knew:
With much in you waste, with many a weed,
And plenty of passions run to seed,
But a little good grain too.

V.

And such as you were, I took you for mine:
Did not you find me yours,
To watch the olive and wait the vine,
And wonder when rivers of oil and wine
Would flow, as the Book assures?

VI.

Well, and if none of these good things came,
What did the failure prove?
The man was my whole world, all the same,
With his flowers to praise or his weeds to blame,
And, either or both, to love.

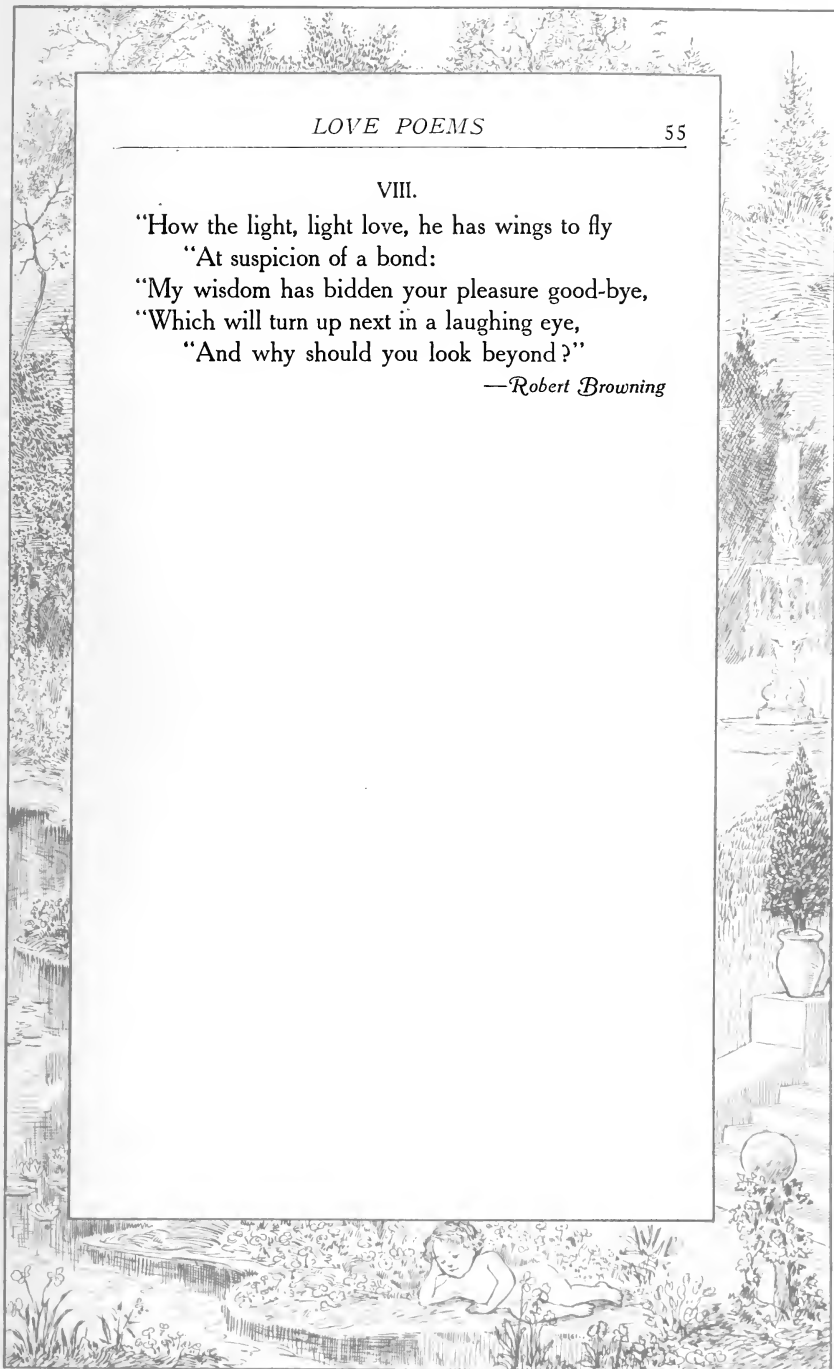
VII.

Yet this turns now to a fault—there! there!
That I do love, watch too long,
And wait too well, and weary and wear;
And 'tis all an old story, and my despair
Fit subject for some new song:

VIII.

"How the light, light love, he has wings to fly
 "At suspicion of a bond:
 "My wisdom has bidden your pleasure good-bye,
 "Which will turn up next in a laughing eye,
 "And why should you look beyond?"

—*Robert Browning*





ROSE MAIDEN

PAUL THUMANN

"Dear rose without a thorn."

From Dramatic Lyrics

WOMEN AND ROSES

I.

I DREAM of a red-rose tree.
And which of its roses three
Is the dearest rose to me ?

II.

Round and round, like a dance of snow
In a dazzling drift, as its guardians, go
Floating the women faded for ages,
Sculptured in stone, on the poet's pages.
Then follow women fresh and gay,
Living and loving and loved to-day.
Last, in the rear, flee the multitude of maidens,
Beauties yet unborn. And all, to one cadence,
They circle their rose on my rose tree.

III.

Dear rose, thy term is reached,
Thy leaf hangs loose and bleached:
Be: pass it unimpeached.

IV.

Stay then, stoop, since I cannot climb,
You, great shapes of the antique time!
How shall I fix you, fire you, freeze you,
Break my heart at your feet to please you ?
Oh, to possess and be possessed!
Hearts that beat 'neath each pallid breast!
Once but of love, the poesy, the passion,
Drink but once and die! — In vain, the same fashion,
They circle their rose on my rose tree.



V.

Dear rose, thy joy's undimmed,
Thy cup is ruby-rimmed,
Thy cup's heart nectar-brimmed.

VI.

Deep, as drops from a statue's plinth
The bee sucked in by the hyacinth,
So will I bury me while burning,
Quench like him at a plunge my yearning,
Eyes in your eyes, lips on your lips!
Fold me fast where the cincture slips,
Prison all my soul in eternities of pleasure,
Girdle me for once! But no—the old measure,
They circle their rose on my rose tree.

VII.

Dear rose without a thorn,
Thy bud's the babe unborn:
First streak of a new morn.

VIII.

Wings, lend wings for the cold, the clear!
What is far conquers what is near.
Roses will bloom nor want beholders,
Sprung from the dust where our flesh moulders.
What shall arrive with the cycle's change?
A novel grace and a beauty strange.
I will make an Eve, be the artist that began her,
Shaped her to his mind!—Alas! in like manner
They circle their rose on my rose tree.

—*Robert Browning*

From Dramatic Lyrics

A FALSE STEP

I.

SWEET, thou hast trod on a heart.
Pass; there's a world full of men;
And women as fair as thou art
Must do such things now and then.

II.

Thou only hast stepped unaware,—
Malice, not one can impute;
And why should a heart have been there
In the way of a fair woman's foot?

III.

It was not a stone that could trip,
Nor was it a thorn that could rend:
Put up thy proud under-lip!
'Twas merely the heart of a friend.

IV.

And yet peradventure one day
Thou, sitting alone at the glass,
Remarking the bloom gone away,
Where the smile in its dimplement was,

V.

And seeking around thee in vain
From hundreds who flattered before,
Such a word as "Oh, not in the main
Do I hold thee less precious, but more!" . . .

VI.

Thou'lt sigh, very like, on thy part,
"Of all I have known or can know,
I wish I had only that Heart
I trod upon ages ago!"

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning





FARE THEE WELL

HERMANN KOCH

"I love thee so, Dear, that I only can leave thee."

Insufficiency

I.

THERE is no one beside thee and no one above thee,
Thou standest alone as the nightingale sings !
And my words that would praise thee are impotent
things,
For none can express thee though all should approve
thee.
I love thee so, Dear, that I only can love thee.

II.

Say, what can I do for thee ? weary thee, grieve
thee ?
Lean on thy shoulder, new burdens to add ?
Weep my tears over thee, making thee sad ?
Oh, hold me not—love me not ! let me retrieve thee.
I love thee so, Dear, that I only can leave thee.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning



FIRST WHISPER OF LOVE

L. ALMA-TADEMA

*"Nor hands nor cheeks keep separate,
When soul is joined to soul."*

Inclusions

I.

OH, wilt thou have my hand, Dear, to lie along in
thine ?

As a little stone in a running stream, it seems to lie and
pine.

Now drop the poor pale hand, Dear, unfit to plight with
thine.

II.

Oh, wilt thou have my cheek, Dear, drawn closer to
thine own ?

My cheek is white, my cheek is worn, by many a tear
run down.

Now leave a little space, Dear, lest it should wet thine
own.

III.

Oh, must thou have my soul, Dear, commingled with
thy soul ?—

Red grows the cheek, and warm the hand; the part is in
the whole :

Nor hands nor cheeks keep separate, when soul is
joined to soul.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning





RUSTIC SIMPLICITY

J. COMERRA-PATON

*"And her feet she has been dipping
In the shallow water's flow."*

The Romance of the Swan's Nest

"So the dreams depart,
So the fading phantoms flee,
And the sharp reality
Now must act its part."

—WESTWOOD'S *Beads from a Rosary*.

I.

LITTLE Ellie sits alone

'Mid the beeches of a meadow,
By a stream-side on the grass,
And the trees are showering down
Doubles of their leaves in shadow
On her shining hair and face.

II.

She has thrown her bonnet by,
And her feet she has been dipping
In the shallow water's flow:
Now she holds them nakedly
In her hands, all sleek and dripping,
While she rocketh to and fro.

III.

Little Ellie sits alone,
And the smile she softly uses
Fills the silence like a speech,
While she thinks what shall be done,
And the sweetest pleasure chooses
For her future within reach.

IV.

Little Ellie in her smile
Chooses—"I will have a lover
Riding on a steed of steeds:
He shall love me without guile,
And to *him* I will discover
The swan's nest among the reeds.

V.

"And the steed shall be red-roan,
And the lover shall be noble,
With an eye that takes the breath:
And the lute he plays upon
Shall strike ladies into trouble,
As his sword strikes men to death.

VI.

"And the steed it shall be shod
All in silver, housed in azure,
And the mane shall swim the wind;
And the hoofs along the sod
Shall flash onward and keep measure,
Till the shepherds look behind.

VII.

"But my lover will not prize
All the glory that he rides in,
When he gazes in my face:
He will say, 'O Love, thine eyes
Build the shrine my soul abides in
And I kneel here for thy grace!'

VIII.

"Then, ay, then he shall kneel low,
With the red-roan steed anear him
Which shall seem to understand,
Till I answer, 'Rise and go!
For the world must love and fear him.
Whom I gift with heart and hand.'

IX.

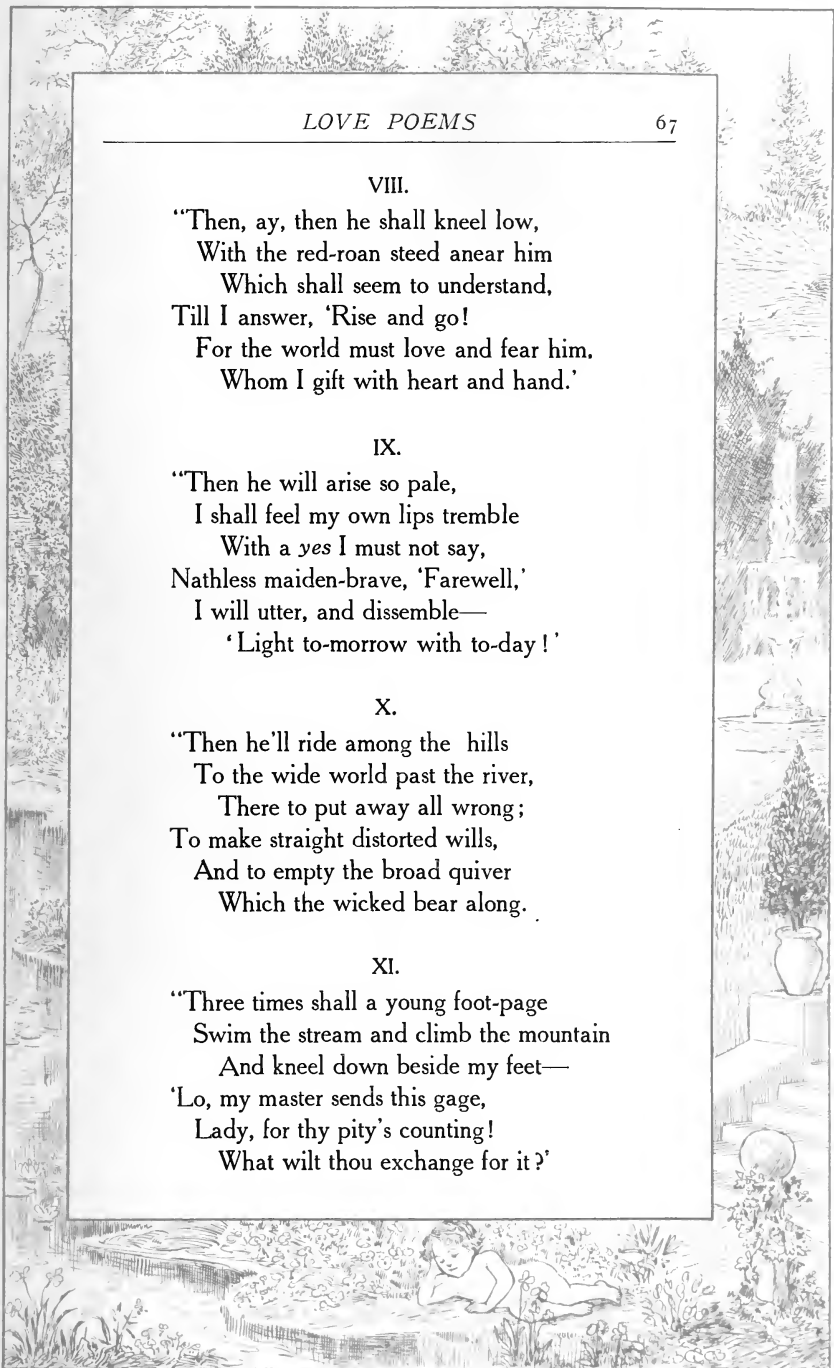
"Then he will arise so pale,
I shall feel my own lips tremble
With a *yes* I must not say,
Nathless maiden-brave, 'Farewell,'
I will utter, and dissemble—
'Light to-morrow with to-day!'

X.

"Then he'll ride among the hills
To the wide world past the river,
There to put away all wrong;
To make straight distorted wills,
And to empty the broad quiver
Which the wicked bear along.

XI.

"Three times shall a young foot-page
Swim the stream and climb the mountain
And kneel down beside my feet—
'Lo, my master sends this gage,
Lady, for thy pity's counting!
What wilt thou exchange for it?'



XII.

"And the first time I will send
A white rosebud for a guerdon,
And the second time, a glove;
But the third time—I may bend
From my pride, and answer—'Pardon
If he comes to take my love.'

XIII.

"Then the young foot-page will run,
Then my lover will ride faster,
Till he kneeleth at my knee:
'I am a duke's eldest son,
Thousand serfs do call me master,
But, O Love, I love but *thee!*'

XIV.

"He will kiss me on the mouth
Then, and lead me as a lover
Through the crowds that praise his deeds;
And, when soul-tied by one troth,
Unto *him* I will discover
That swan's nest among the reeds."

XV.

Little Ellie, with her smile
Not yet ended, rose up gayly,
Tied the bonnet, donned the shoe,
And went homeward, round a mile,
Just to see, as she did daily,
What more eggs were with the two.

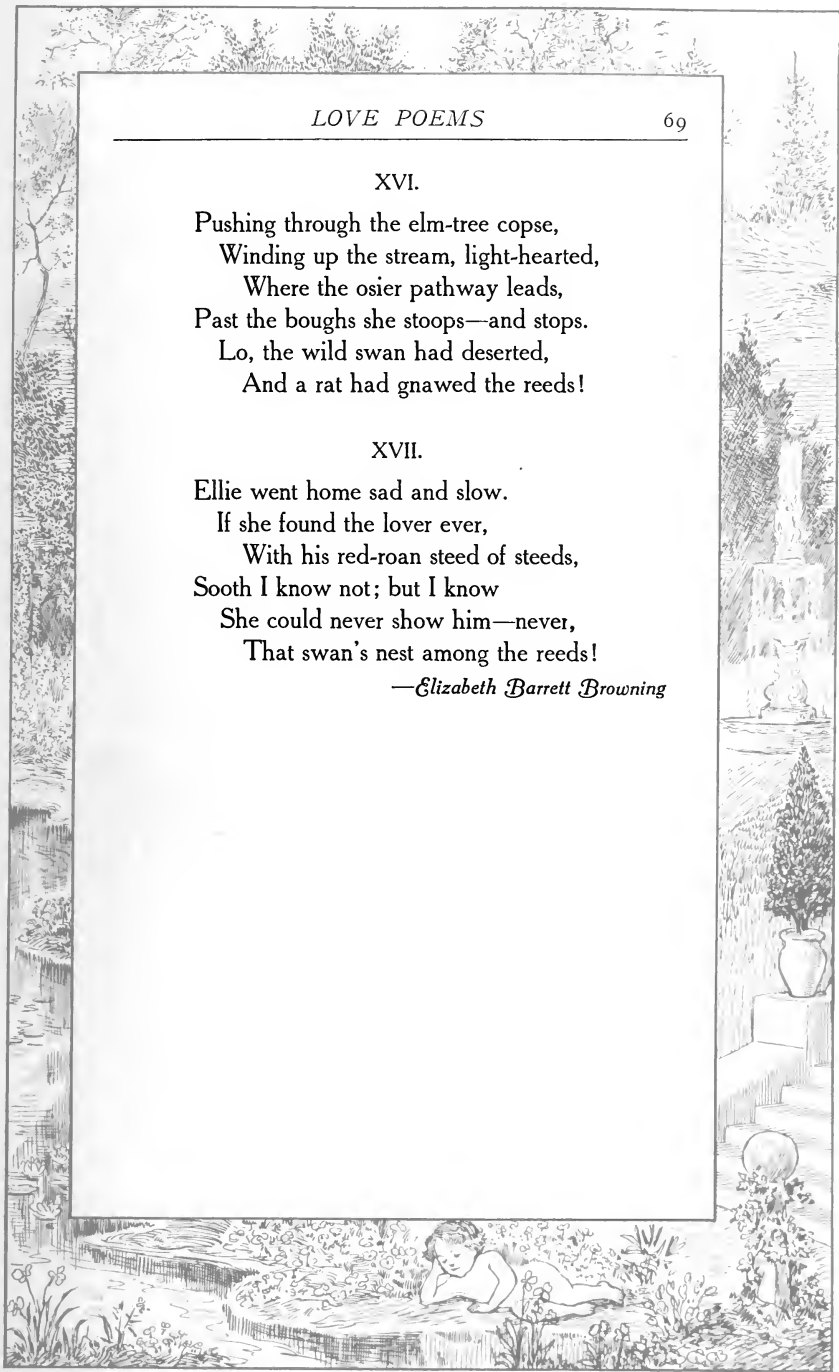
XVI.

Pushing through the elm-tree copse,
Winding up the stream, light-hearted,
Where the osier pathway leads,
Past the boughs she stoops—and stops.
Lo, the wild swan had deserted,
And a rat had gnawed the reeds!

XVII.

Ellie went home sad and slow.
If she found the lover ever,
With his red-roan steed of steeds,
Sooth I know not; but I know
She could never show him—never,
That swan's nest among the reeds!

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*





SWEET SILENCE

J. HAYNES WILLIAMS

"Was my silence wrong or right?"

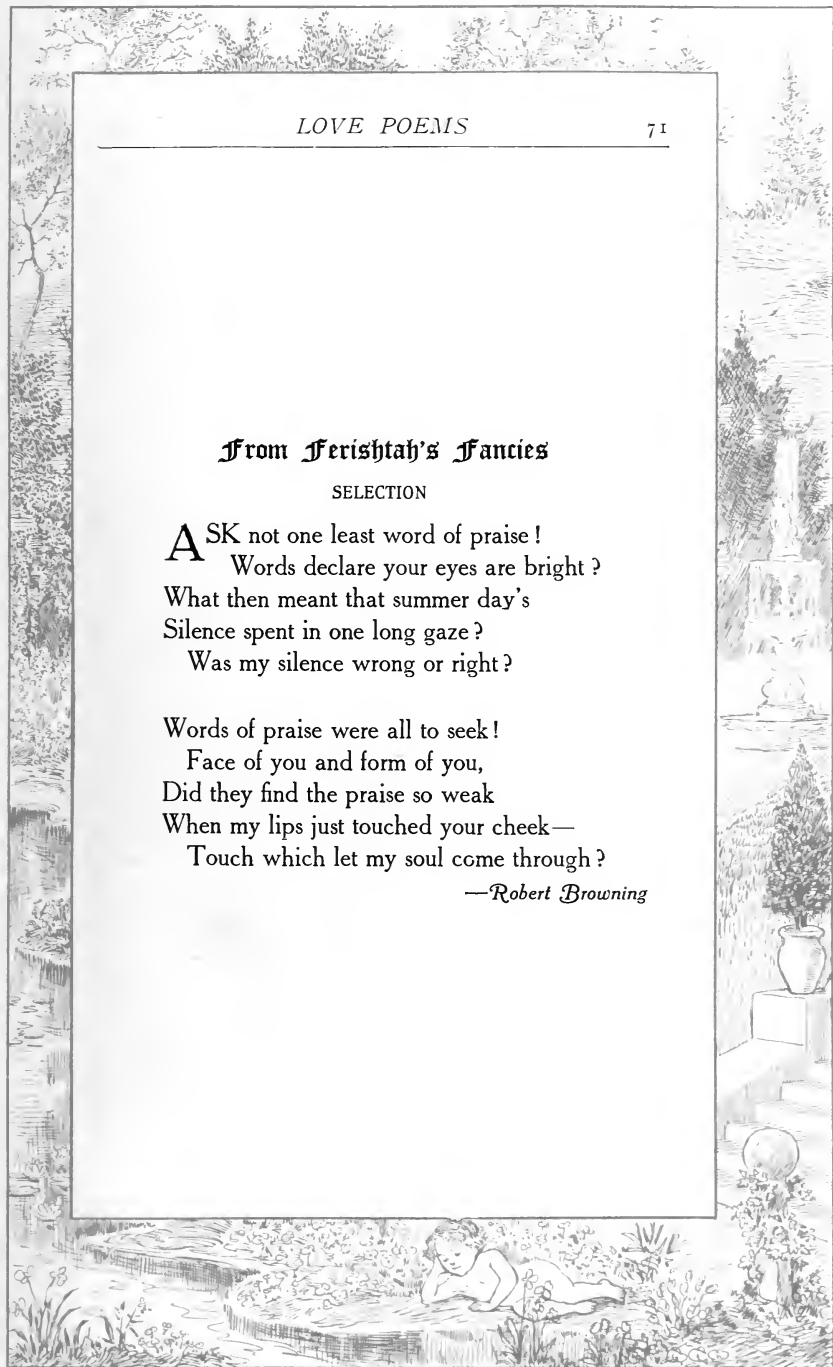
From Ferishtah's Fancies

SELECTION

ASK not one least word of praise !
 Words declare your eyes are bright ?
 What then meant that summer day's
 Silence spent in one long gaze ?
 Was my silence wrong or right ?

Words of praise were all to seek !
 Face of you and form of you,
 Did they find the praise so weak
 When my lips just touched your cheek—
 Touch which let my soul come through ?

—*Robert Browning*





LOVE THIRSTY

JEAN AUBERT

*"What lies above?
Sunshine and love."*

From La Saisiaz

SELECTION

I.

GOOD, to forgive ;
Best, to forget !
Living, we fret ;
Dying, we live.
Fretless and free,
Soul, clap thy pinion !
Earth have dominion,
Body, o'er thee !

II.

Wander at will,
Day after day, —
Wander away,
Wandering still —
Soul that canst soar !
Body may slumber :
Body shall cumber
Soul-flight no more.

III.

Waft of soul's wing !
What lies above ?
Sunshine and Love,
Skyblue and Spring !
Body hides — where ?
Ferns of all feather,
Mosses and heather,
Yours be the care !

—*Robert Browning*



From Dramatic Lyrics

A WOMAN'S LAST WORD

I.

LET'S contend no more, Love,
Strive nor weep :
All be as before, Love,
—Only sleep!

II.

What so wild as words are ?
I and thou
In debate, as birds are,
Hawk on bough!

III.

See the creature stalking
While we speak !
Hush and hide the talking,
Cheek on cheek!

IV.

What so false as truth is,
False to thee ?
Where the serpent's tooth is
Shun the tree—

V.

Where the apple reddens
Never pry—
Lest we lose our Edens,
Eve and I.

VI.

Be a god and hold me
With a charm!
Be a man and fold me
With thine arm!

VII.

Teach me, only teach, Love!
As I ought
I will speak thy speech, Love,
Think thy thought—

VIII.

Meet, if thou require it,
Both demands,
Laying flesh and spirit
In thy hands.

IX.

That shall be to-morrow
Not to-night:
I must bury sorrow
Out of sight:

X.

—Must a little weep, Love,
(Foolish me!)
And so fall asleep, Love,
Loved by thee.

—*Robert Browning*





REMEMBER ME

C. FROSCHL

*"O the old wall here! How I could pass
Life in a long Midsummer day."*

From Pacchiarotto

PROLOGUE

I.

O THE old wall here ! How I could pass
 Life in a long Midsummer day,
 My feet confined to a plot of grass,
 My eyes from a wall not once away !

II.

And lush and lithe do the creepers clothe
 Yon wall I watch, with a wealth of green :
 Its bald red bricks draped, nothing loth,
 In lappets of tangle they laugh between.

III.

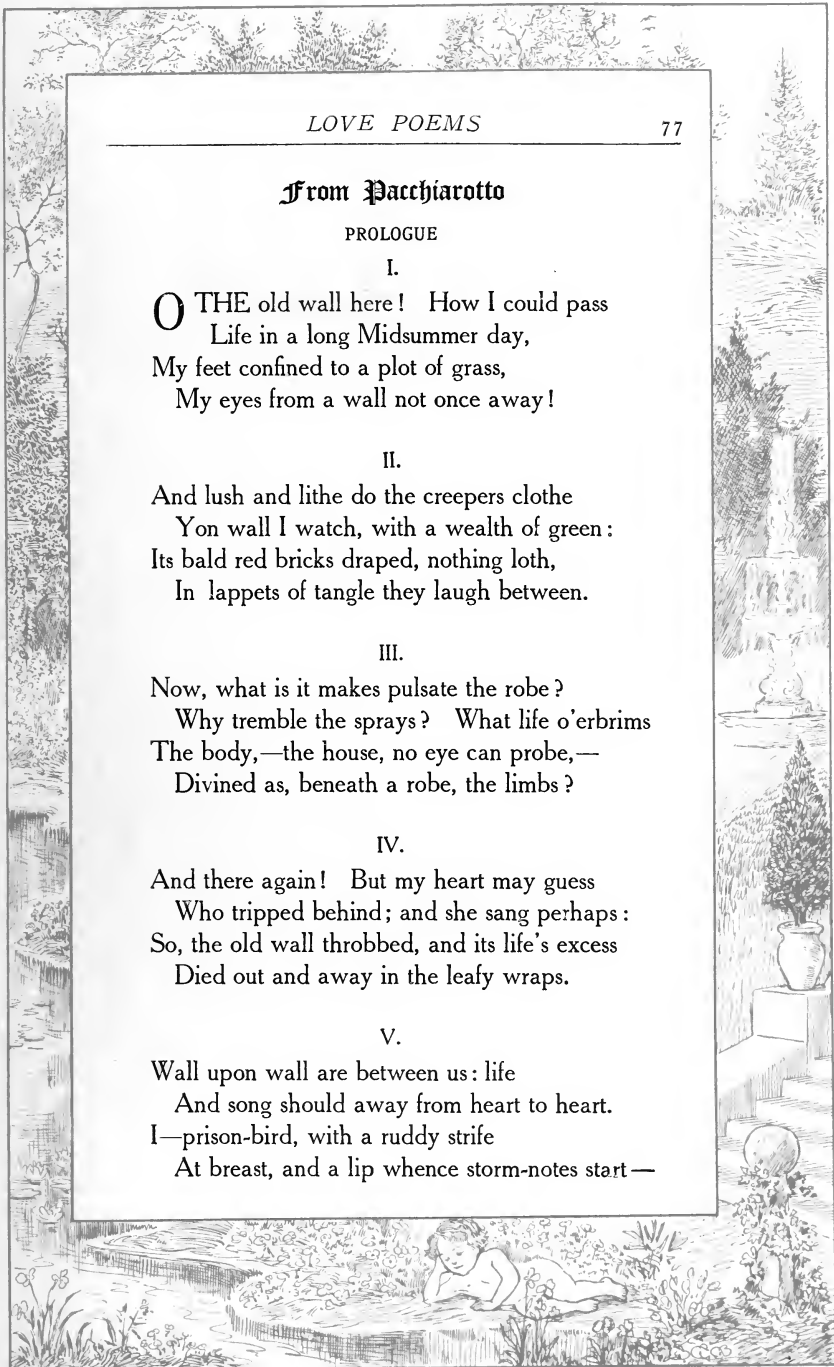
Now, what is it makes pulsate the robe ?
 Why tremble the sprays ? What life o'erbrims
 The body,—the house, no eye can probe,—
 Divined as, beneath a robe, the limbs ?

IV.

And there again ! But my heart may guess
 Who tripped behind ; and she sang perhaps :
 So, the old wall throbbed, and its life's excess
 Died out and away in the leafy wraps.

V.

Wall upon wall are between us : life
 And song should away from heart to heart.
 I—prison-bird, with a ruddy strife
 At breast, and a lip whence storm-notes start —



VI.

Hold on, hope hard in the subtle thing
That's spirit: though cloistered fast, soar free;
Account as wood, brick, stone, this ring
Of the rueful neighbors, and—forth to thee!

—*Robert Browning*

From Dramatic Lyrics

ONE WAY OF LOVE

I.

ALL June I bound the rose in sheaves.
Now, rose by rose, I strip the leaves
And strew them where Pauline may pass.
She will not turn aside? Alas!
Let them lie. Suppose they die?
The chance was they might take her eye.

II.

How many a month I strove to suit
These stubborn fingers to the lute!
To-day I venture all I know.
She will not hear my music? So!
Break the string; fold music's wing:
Suppose Pauline had bade me sing!

III.

My whole life long I learned to love.
This hour my utmost art I prove
And speak my passion—heaven or hell?
She will not give me heaven? 'T is well!
Lose who may—I still can say,
Those who win heaven, blest are they!

—Robert Browning





FOND RECOLLECTIONS

E. NICZKY

*"And ever I see her soft white fingers
Searching after the bud she found."*

From Dramatic Lyrics

GARDEN FANCIES

I.—THE FLOWER'S NAME

I.

HERE'S the garden she walked across,
Arm in my arm, such a short while since :
Hark, now I push its wicket, the moss
Hinders the hinges and makes them wince !
She must have reached this shrub ere she turned,
As back with that murmur the wicket swung ;
For she laid the poor snail, my chance foot spurned,
To feed and forget it the leaves among.

II.

Down this side of the gravel-walk
She went while her robe's edge brushed the box :
And here she paused in her gracious talk
To point me a moth on the milk-white phlox.
Roses, ranged in valiant row,
I will never think that she passed you by !
She loves you noble roses, I know ;
But yonder, see, where the rock-plants lie !

III.

This flower she stopped at, finger on lip,
Stooped over, in doubt, as settling its claim ;
Till she gave me, with pride to make no slip,
Its soft meandering Spanish name :
What a name ! Was it love or praise ?
Speech half-sleep or song half-awake ?
I must learn Spanish, one of these days,
Only for that slow sweet name's sake.



IV.

Roses, if I live and do well,
I may bring her, one of these days,
To fix you fast with as fine a spell,
Fit you each with his Spanish phrase;
But do not detain me now; for she lingers
There, like sunshine over the ground,
And ever I see her soft white fingers
Searching after the bud she found.

V.

Flower, you Spaniard, look that you grow not,
Stay as you are and be loved for ever!
Bud, if I kiss you 'tis that you blow not:
Mind, the shut pink mouth opens never!
For while it pouts, her fingers wrestle,
Twinkling the audacious leaves between,
Till round they turn and down they nestle—
Is not the dear mark still to be seen?

VI.

Where I find her not, beauties vanish;
Whither I follow her, beauties flee:
Is there no method to tell her in Spanish
June's twice June since she breathed it with me?
Come, bud, show me the least of her traces,
Treasure my lady's lightest footfall!—
Ah, you may flout and turn up your faces—
Roses, you are not so fair after all!

—Robert Browning

May's Love

I.

YOU love all, you say,
Round, beneath, above me:
Find me then some way
Better than to love me,
Me, too, dearest May!

II.

O world-kissing eyes
Which the blue heavens melt to;
I, sad, otherwise,
Loathe the sweet looks dealt to
All things—men and flies.

III.

You love all, you say:
Therefore, Dear, abate me
Just your love, I pray!
Shut your eyes and hate me—
Only *me*—fair May!

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning





LANDSCAPE

“Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach.”

CLAUDE MONET

From Dramatic Lyrics

MEETING AT NIGHT

I.

THE gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

II.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud thro' its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

—*Robert Browning*



VIOLANTE

PALMA VECCHIO

*"O loaded curls! release your store
Of warmth and scent."*

From Dramatic Lyrics

IN THREE DAYS

I.

SO, I shall see her in three days
And just one night, but nights are short
Then two long hours, and that is morn.
See how I come, unchanged, unworn!
Feel, where my life broke off from thine,
How fresh the splinters keep and fine,—
Only a touch and we combine!

II.

Too long, this time of year, the days!
But nights at least the nights are short.
As night shows where her one moon is,
A hand's-breadth of pure light and bliss,
So life's night gives my lady birth
And my eyes hold her! What is worth
The rest of heaven, the rest of earth?

III.

O loaded curls! release your store
Of warmth and scent, as once before
The tingling hair did, lights and darks
Out breaking into fairy sparks,
When under curl and curl I pried
After the warmth and scent inside,
Thro' lights and darks how manifold—
The dark inspired, the light controlled!
As early Art embrowns the gold.



IV.

What great fear, should one say, "Three days
"That change the world might change as well
"Your fortune; and if joy delays,
"Be happy that no worse befell!"
What small fear, if another says,
"Three days and one short night beside
"May throw no shadow on your ways;
"But years must teem with change untried,
"With chance not easily defied,
"With an end somewhere undescried."
No fear!—or, if a fear be born
This minute, it dies out in scorn.
Fear? I shall see her in three days
And one night, now the nights are short,
Then just two hours, and that is morn.

—Robert Browning

Proof and Disproof

I.

DOST thou love me, my Belovèd?
Who shall answer yes or no?
What is provèd or disprovèd
When my soul inquireth so,
Dost thou love me, my Belovèd?

II.

I have seen thy heart to-day,
Never open to the crowd,
While to love me aye and aye
Was the vow as it was vowed
By thine eyes of steadfast gray.

III.

Now I sit alone,—
And the hot tears break and burn,
Now, Belovèd, thou art gone,
Doubt and terror have their turn.
Is it love that I have known.

IV.

I have known some bitter things,—
Anguish, anger, solitude.
Year by year an evil brings,
Year by year denies a good;
March winds violate my springs.

V.

I have known how sickness bends,
I have known how sorrow breaks,—
How quick hopes have sudden ends,
How the heart thinks till it aches
Of the smile of buried friends.



VI.

Last, I have known *thee*, my brave
Noble thinker, lover, doer!
The best knowledge last I have.
But thou comest as the thrower
Of fresh flowers upon a grave.

VII.

Count what feelings used to move me!
Can this love assort with those?
Thou, who art so far above me,
Wilt thou stoop so, for repose?
Is it true that thou canst love me?

VIII.

Do not blame me if I doubt thee.
I can call love by its name
When thine arm is wrapt about me;
But even love seems not the same,
When I sit alone, without thee.

IX.

In thy clear eyes I descried
Many a proof of love, to-day;
But to-night, those unbelied
Speechful eyes being gone away,
There's the proof to seek, beside.

X.

Dost thou love me, my Belovèd?
Only *thou* canst answer yes!
And, thou gone, the proof's disprovèd,
And the cry rings answerless—
Dost thou love me, my Belovèd?

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

From Dramatic Lyrics

ANY WIFE TO ANY HUSBAND

I.

MY love, this is the bitterest, that thou—
Who art all truth, and who dost love me now
As thine eyes say, as thy voice breaks to say—
Shouldst love so truly, and couldst love me still
A whole long life through, had but love its will,
Would death that leads me from thee brook delay.

II.

I have but to be by thee, and thy hand
Will never let mine go, nor heart withstand
The beating of my heart to reach its place.
When shall I look for thee and feel thee gone ?
When cry for the old comfort and find none ?
Never, I know ! Thy soul is in thy face.

III.

Oh, I should fade—'t is willed so ! Might I save
Gladly I would, whatever beauty gave
Joy to thy sense, for that was precious too.
It is not to be granted. But the soul
Whence the love comes, all ravage leaves that whole ;
Vainly the flesh fades, soul makes all things new.

IV.

It would not be because my eye grew dim
Thou couldst not find the love there, thanks to Him
Who never is dishonored in the spark
He gave us from his fire of fires, and bade
Remember whence it sprang, nor be afraid
While that burns on, though all the rest grow dark.



V.

So, how thou wouldst be perfect, white and clean
Outside as inside, soul and soul's demesne
Alike, this body given to show it by!
Oh, three-parts through the worst of life's abyss,
What plaudits from the next world after this,
Couldst thou repeat a stroke and gain the sky!

VI.

And is it not the bitterer to think
That, disengage our hands and thou wilt sink
Although thy love was love in very deed?
I know that nature! Pass a festive day,
Thou dost not throw its relic-flower away
Nor bid its music's loitering echo speed.

VII.

Thou let'st the stranger's glove lie where it fell;
If old things remain old things all is well,
For thou art grateful as becomes man best:
And hadst thou only heard me play one tune,
Or viewed me from a window, not so soon
With thee would such things fade as with the rest.

VIII.

I seem to see! We meet and part; 't is brief;
The book I opened keeps a folded leaf,
The very chair I sat on, breaks the rank;
That is a portrait of me on the wall—
Three lines, my face comes at so slight a call:
And for all this, one little hour to thank!

IX.

But now, because the hour through years was fixed,
Because our inmost beings met and mixed,
Because thou once hast loved me—wilt thou dare
Say to thy soul and Who may list beside,
“Therefore she is immortally my bride;
“Chante cannot change my love, nor time impair.

X.

“So, what if in the dusk of life that’s left,
“I, a tired traveller of my sun bereft,
“Look from my path when, mimicking the same,
“The firefly glimpses past me, come and gone?
“—Where was it till the sunset? where anon
“It will be at the sunrise? What’s to blame?”

XI.

Is it so helpful to thee! Canst thou take
The mimic up, nor, for the true thing’s sake,
Put gently by such efforts at a beam?
Is the remainder of the way so long,
Thou need’st the little solace, thou the strong?
Watch out thy watch, let weak ones doze and dream!

XII.

—Ah, but the fresher faces! “Is it true,”
Thou’lt ask, “some eyes are beautiful and new?
“Some hair,—how can one choose but grasp such
wealth?
“And if a man would press his lips to lips
“Fresh as the wilding hedge-rose-cup there slips
“The dew-drop out of, must it be by stealth?



XIII.

"It cannot change the love still kept for Her,
"More than if such a picture I prefer
 "Passing a day with, to a room's bare side :
"The painted form takes nothing she possessed,
"Yet, while the Titian's Venus lies at rest,
 "A man looks. Once more, what is there to chide?"

XIV.

So must I see, from where I sit and watch,
My own self sell myself, my hand attach
 Its warrant to the very thefts from me—
Thy singleness of soul that made me proud,
Thy purity of heart I loved aloud,
 Thy man's-truth I was bold to bid God see!

XV.

Love so, then, if thou wilt! Give all thou canst
Away to the new faces—disentranced,
 (Say it and think it) obdurate no more :
Re-issue looks and words from the old mint,
Pass them afresh, no matter whose the print
 Image and superscription once they bore!

XVI.

Re-coin thyself and give it them to spend,—
It all comes to the same thing at the end,
 Since mine thou wast, mine art and mine shalt be,
Faithful or faithless, sealing up the sum
Or lavish of my treasure, thou must come
 Back to the heart's place here I keep for thee!

XVII.

Only, why should it be with stain at all?
Why must I, 'twixt the leaves of coronal,
Put any kiss of pardon on thy brow?
Why need the other women know so much,
And talk together, "Such the look and such
"The smile he used to love with, then as now!"

XVIII.

Might I die last and show thee! Should I find
Such hardship in the few years left behind,
If free to take and light my lamp, and go
Into thy tomb, and shut the door and sit,
Seeing thy face on those four sides of it
The better that they are so blank, I know!

XIX.

Why, time was what I wanted, to turn o'er
Within my mind each look, get more and more
By heart each word, too much to learn at first;
And join thee all the fitter for the pause
'Neath the low doorway's lintel. That were cause
For lingering, though thou calledst, if I durst!

XX.

And yet thou art the nobler of us two:
What dare I dream of, that thou canst not do,
Outstripping my ten small steps with one stride?
I'll say then, here's a trial and a task—
Is it to bear?—if easy, I'll not ask:
Though love fail, I can trust on in thy pride.



XXI.

Pride?—when those eyes forestall the life behind
The death I have to go through!—when I find,
Now that I want thy help most, all of thee!
What did I fear? Thy love shall hold me fast
Until the little minute's sleep is past
And I wake saved.—And yet it will not be!

—*Robert Browning*

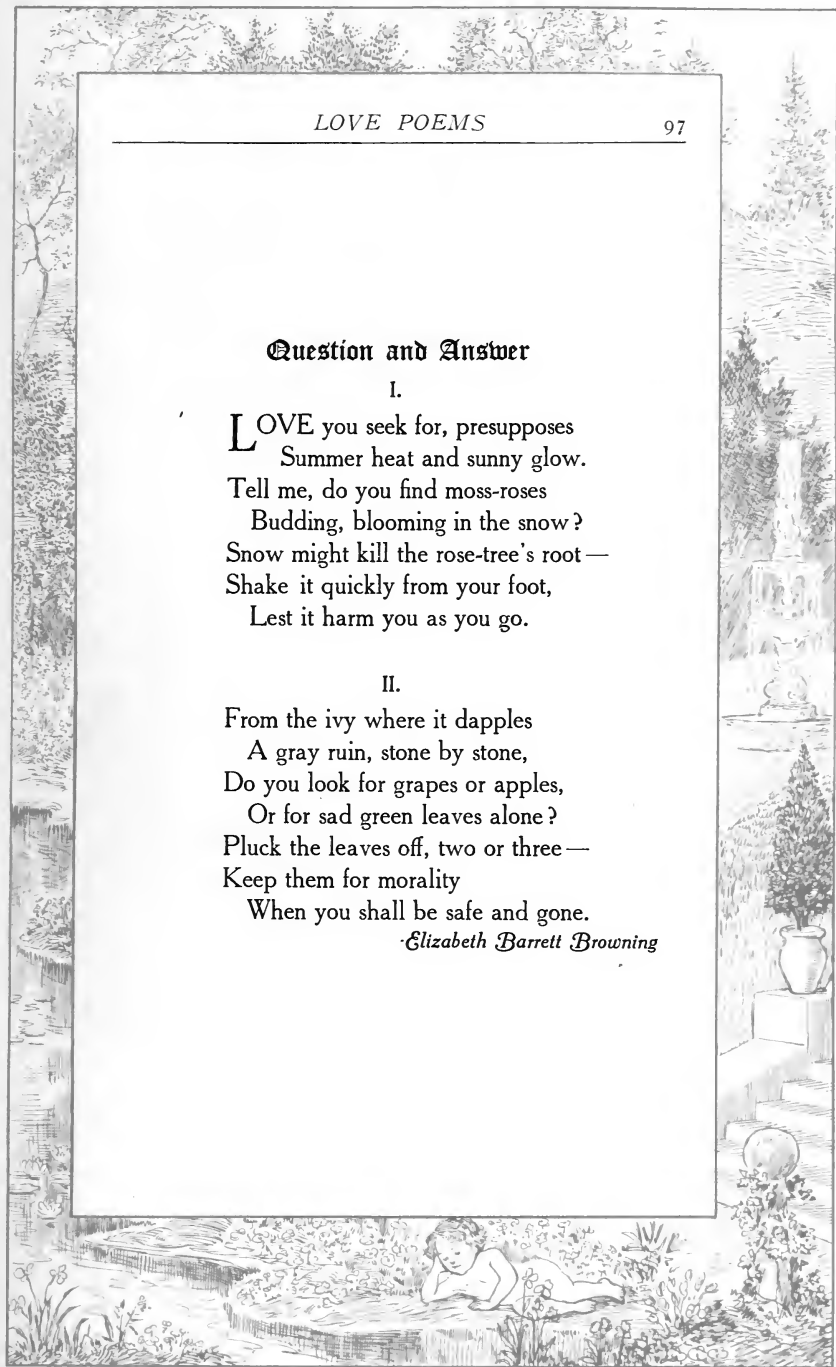
Question and Answer

I.

LOVE you seek for, presupposes
Summer heat and sunny glow.
Tell me, do you find moss-roses
Budding, blooming in the snow?
Snow might kill the rose-tree's root —
Shake it quickly from your foot,
Lest it harm you as you go.

II.

From the ivy where it dapples
A gray ruin, stone by stone,
Do you look for grapes or apples,
Or for sad green leaves alone?
Pluck the leaves off, two or three —
Keep them for morality
When you shall be safe and gone.
Elizabeth Barrett Browning





CORN FLOWERS

PAUL THUMANN

*"And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
'Tis only a page that carols unseen!"*

From Pippa Passes

NOON

PIPPA, *singing*

I.

GIVE her but a least excuse to love me!
When—where—
How—can this arm establish her above me,
If fortune fixed her as my lady there,
There already, to eternally reprove me ?
("Hist!"—said Kate the Queen;
But "Oh!" cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
" 'T is only a page that carols unseen,
"Crumbling your hounds their messes!")

II.

Is she wronged ?—To the rescue of her honor,
My heart!
Is she poor ?—What costs it to be styled a donor ?
Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part.
But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her!
("Nay, list!"—bade Kate the Queen;
And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
" 'T is only a page that carols unseen,
"Fitting your hawks their jesses!")

—Robert Browning

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ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

SIR F. LEIGHTON

*"Hold me but safe again within the bond
Of one immortal look!"*

From Dramatis Personae

EURYDICE TO ORPHEUS

A PICTURE BY LEIGHTON

BUT give them me, the mouth, the eyes, the brow !
Let them once more absorb me ! One look now
Will lap me round for ever, not to pass
Out of its light, though darkness lie beyond :
Hold me but safe again within the bond
Of one immortal look ! All woe that was,
Forgotten, and all terror that may be,
Defied,—no past is mine, no future : look at me !

—Robert Browning



A HAYMAKER

F. N. A. FEYEN-PERRIN

*"This is but a spray the Bird clung to,
Making it blossom with pleasure."*

From Dramatic Lyrics

MISCONCEPTIONS

I.

THIS is a spray the Bird clung to,
Making it blossom with pleasure,
Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,
Fit for her nest and her treasure.
Oh, what a hope beyond measure
Was the poor spray's, which the flying feet hung to,—
So to be singled out, built in, and sung to!

II.

This is a heart the Queen leant on,
Thrilled in a minute erratic,
Ere the true bosom she bent on,
Meet for love's regal dalmatic.*
Oh, what a fancy ecstatic
Was the poor heart's, ere the wanderer went on—
Love to be saved for it, proffered to, spent on!

—*Robert Browning*

*A vestment used by ecclesiastics, and formerly by senators and persons of high rank.





TEACHER AND PUPIL

OSKAR BEGAS

*"Look in my eyes!
Wilt thou change too?"*

Dramatis Personae

JAMES LEE'S WIFE

I.—JAMES LEE'S WIFE SPEAKS AT THE WINDOW

I.

AH, Love, but a day
And the world has changed!
The sun's away,
And the bird estranged;
The wind has dropped,
And the sky's deranged:
Summer has stopped.

II.

Look in my eyes!
Wilt thou change too?
Should I fear surprise?
Shall I find aught new
In the old and dear,
In the good and true,
With the changing year?

III.

Thou art a man,
But I am thy love.
For the lake, its swan;
For the dell, its dove;
And for thee—(oh, haste!)
Me, to bend above,
Me, to hold embraced.

—Robert Browning





LYDIA

N. SICHEL

*"So we leave the sweet face fondly there:
Be its beauty its sole duty!"*

From Dramatic Lyrics

A PRETTY WOMAN

I.

THAT fawn-skin dappled hair of hers,
And the blue eye
Dear and dewy,
And that infantine fresh air of hers!

II.

To think men cannot take you, Sweet,
And enfold you,
Ay, and hold you,
And so keep you what they make you, Sweet!

III.

You like us for a glance, you know—
For a word's sake
Or a sword's sake,
All's the same, whate'er the chance, you know.

IV.

And in turn we make you ours, we say—
You and youth too,
Eyes and mouth too,
All the face composed of flowers, we say.

V.

All's our own, to make the most of, Sweet—
Sing and say for,
Watch and pray for,
Keep a secret or go boast of, Sweet!



VI.

But for loving, why, you would not, Sweet,
Though we prayed you,
Paid you, brayed you
In a mortar—for you could not, Sweet!

VII.

So, we leave the sweet face fondly there:
Be its beauty
Its sole duty!
Let all hope of grace beyond, lie there!

VIII.

And while the face lies quiet there,
Who shall wonder
That I ponder
A conclusion? I will try it there.

IX.

As,—why must one, for the love foregone,
Scout mere liking?
Thunder-striking
Earth,—the heaven, we looked above for, gone!

X.

Why, with beauty, needs there money be,
Love with liking?
Crush the fly-king
In his gauze, because no honey-bee?

XI.

May not liking be so simple-sweet,
If love grew there
'T would undo there
All that breaks the cheek to dimples sweet?

XII.

Is the creature too imperfect, say?
Would you mend it
And so end it?
Since not all addition perfects aye!

XIII.

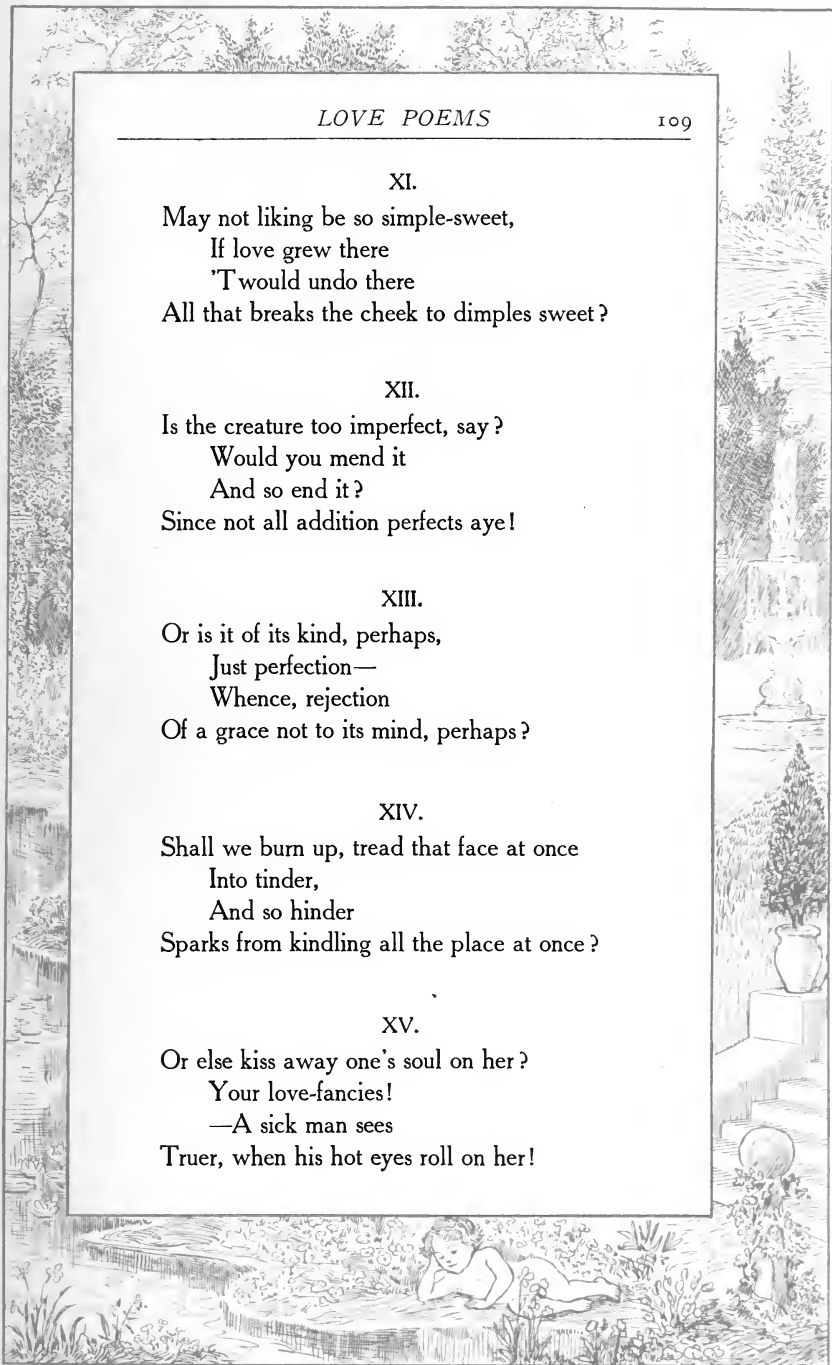
Or is it of its kind, perhaps,
Just perfection—
Whence, rejection
Of a grace not to its mind, perhaps?

XIV.

Shall we burn up, tread that face at once
Into tinder,
And so hinder
Sparks from kindling all the place at once?

XV.

Or else kiss away one's soul on her?
Your love-fancies!
—A sick man sees
Truer, when his hot eyes roll on her!



XVI.

Thus the craftsman thinks to grace the rose,—
Plucks a mold-flower
For his gold flower,
Uses fine things that efface the rose.

XVII.

Rosy rubies make its cup more rose,
Precious metals
Ape the petals,—
Last, some old king locks it up, morose!

XVIII.

Then how grace a rose? I know a way!
Leave it, rather.
Must you gather?
Smell, kiss, wear it—at last, throw away!

—*Robert Browning*

The Best Thing in the World

WHAT'S the best thing in the world ?
June-rose, by May-dew impearled ;
Sweet south-wind, that means no rain ;
Truth, not cruel to a friend ;
Pleasure, not in haste to end ;
Beauty, not self-decked and curled
Till its pride is over-plain ;
Light, that never makes you wink ;
Memory, that gives no pain ;
Love, when, *so*, you're loved again.
What's the best thing in the world ?
—Something out of it, I think.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning





BINDING ON THE ROSES

JULES SALLES

"You, forsooth, a flower? Nay, my love, a jewel—"

Magical Nature

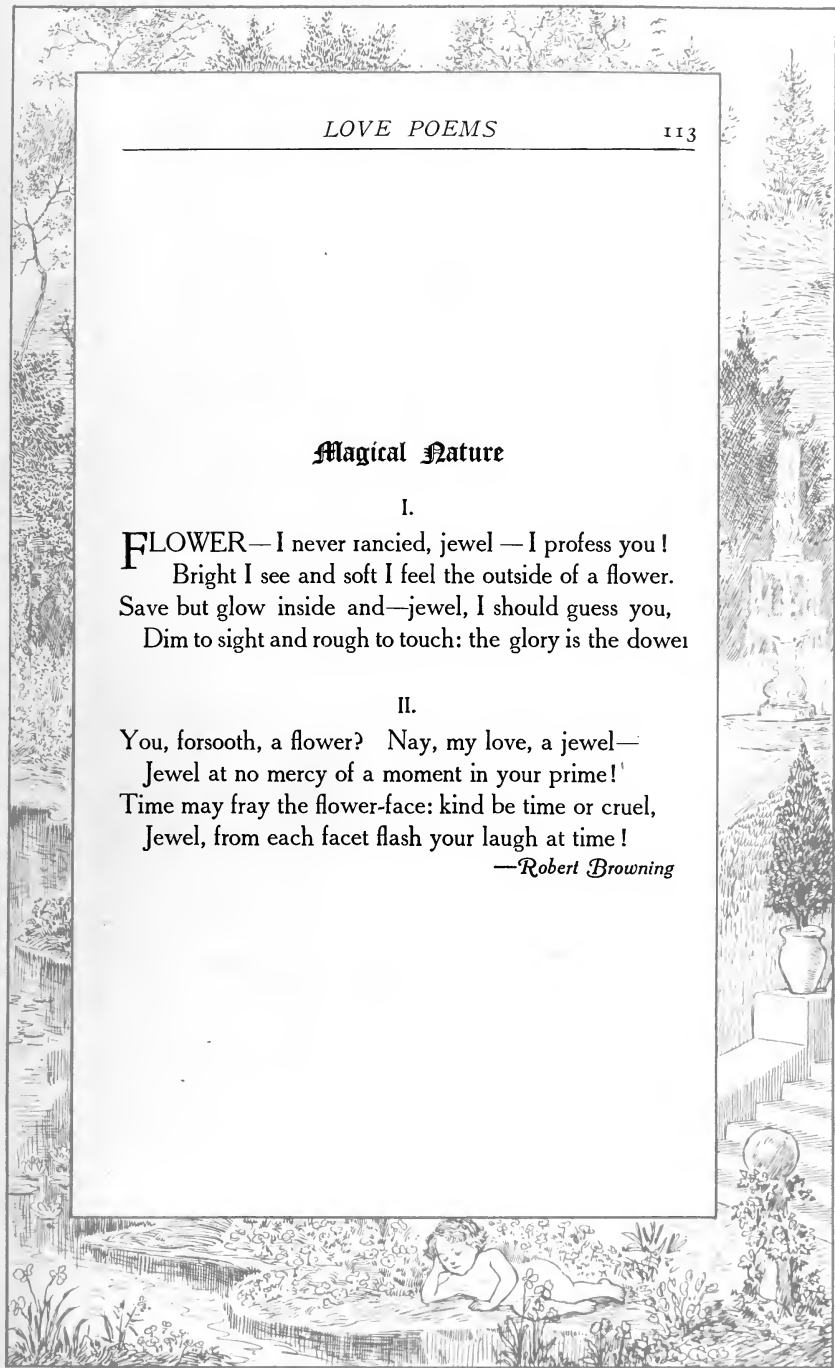
I.

FLOWER—I never rancied, jewel—I profess you!
Bright I see and soft I feel the outside of a flower.
Save but glow inside and—jewel, I should guess you,
Dim to sight and rough to touch: the glory is the dower!

II.

You, forsooth, a flower? Nay, my love, a jewel—
Jewel at no mercy of a moment in your prime!
Time may fray the flower-face: kind be time or cruel,
Jewel, from each facet flash your laugh at time!

—Robert Browning





EXPECTATION

JAN VAN BEERS

"Fair Amy of the terraced house."

Amy's Cruelty

I.

FAIR Amy of the terraced house,
Assist me to discover
Why you who would not hurt a mouse
Can torture so your lover.

II.

You give your coffee to the cat,
You stroke the dog for coming,
And all your face grows kinder at
The little brown bee's humming.

III.

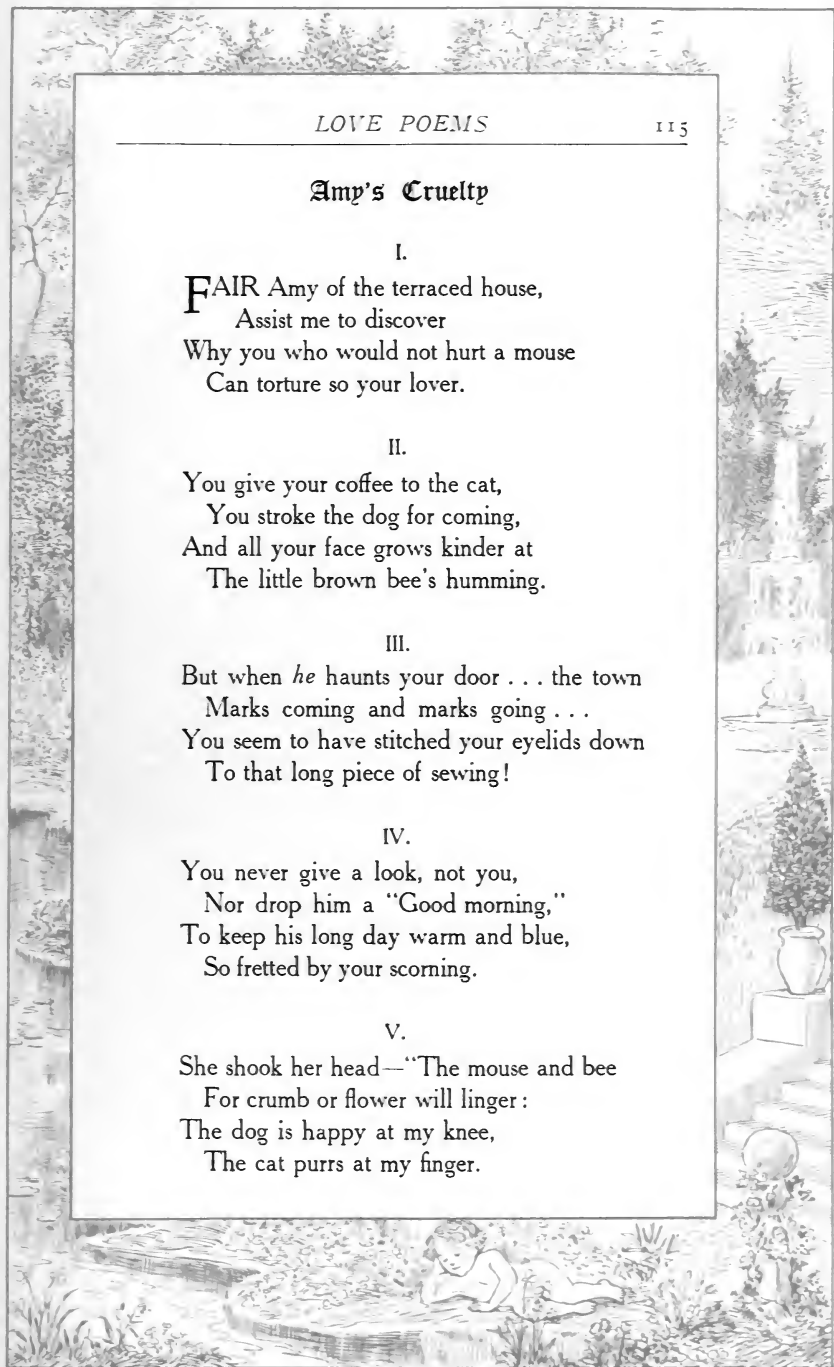
But when *he* haunts your door . . . the town
Marks coming and marks going . . .
You seem to have stitched your eyelids down
To that long piece of sewing!

IV.

You never give a look, not you,
Nor drop him a "Good morning,"
To keep his long day warm and blue,
So fretted by your scorning.

V.

She shook her head—"The mouse and bee
For crumb or flower will linger:
The dog is happy at my knee,
The cat purrs at my finger.



VI.

"But *he* . . . to *him*, the least thing given
Means great things at a distance;
He wants my world, my sun, my heaven,
Soul, body, whole existence.

VII.

'They say love gives as well as takes;
But I'm a simple maiden,—
My mother's first smile when she wakes
I still have smiled and prayed in.

VIII.

"I only know my mother's love
Which gives all and asks nothing;
And this new loving sets the groove
Too much the way of loathing.

IX.

"Unless he gives me all in change,
I forfeit all things by him:
The risk is terrible and strange—
I tremble, doubt . . . deny him.

X.

"He's sweetest friend or hardest foe,
Best angel or worst devil;
I either hate or . . . love him so,
I can't be merely civil !

XI.

"You trust a woman who puts forth
Her blossoms thick as summer's?
You think she dreams what love is worth,
Who casts it to new-corners?"

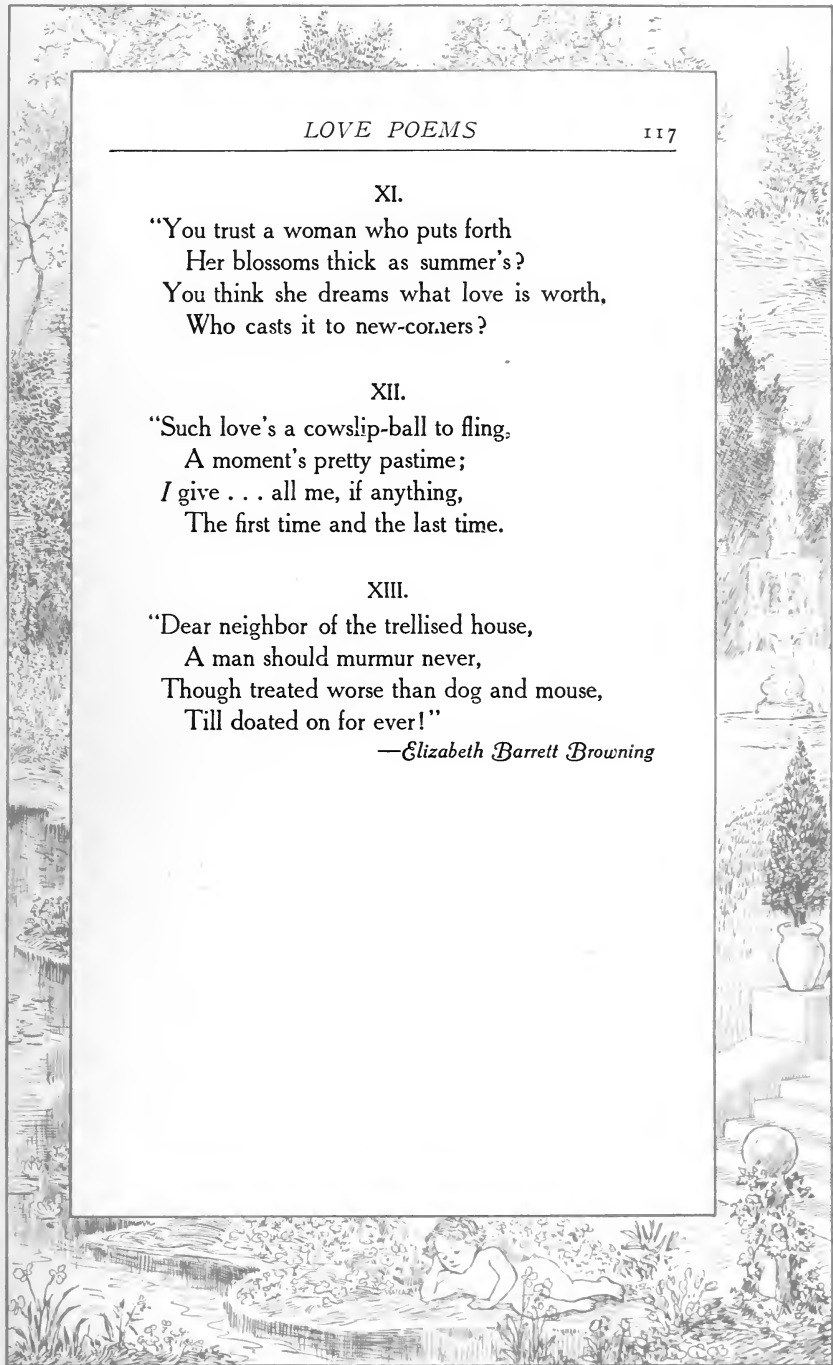
XII.

"Such love's a cowslip-ball to fling,
A moment's pretty pastime;
I give . . . all me, if anything,
The first time and the last time.

XIII.

"Dear neighbor of the trellised house,
A man should murmur never,
Though treated worse than dog and mouse,
Till doated on for ever!"

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*





REPOSE OF SPRING

H. KNOCHL

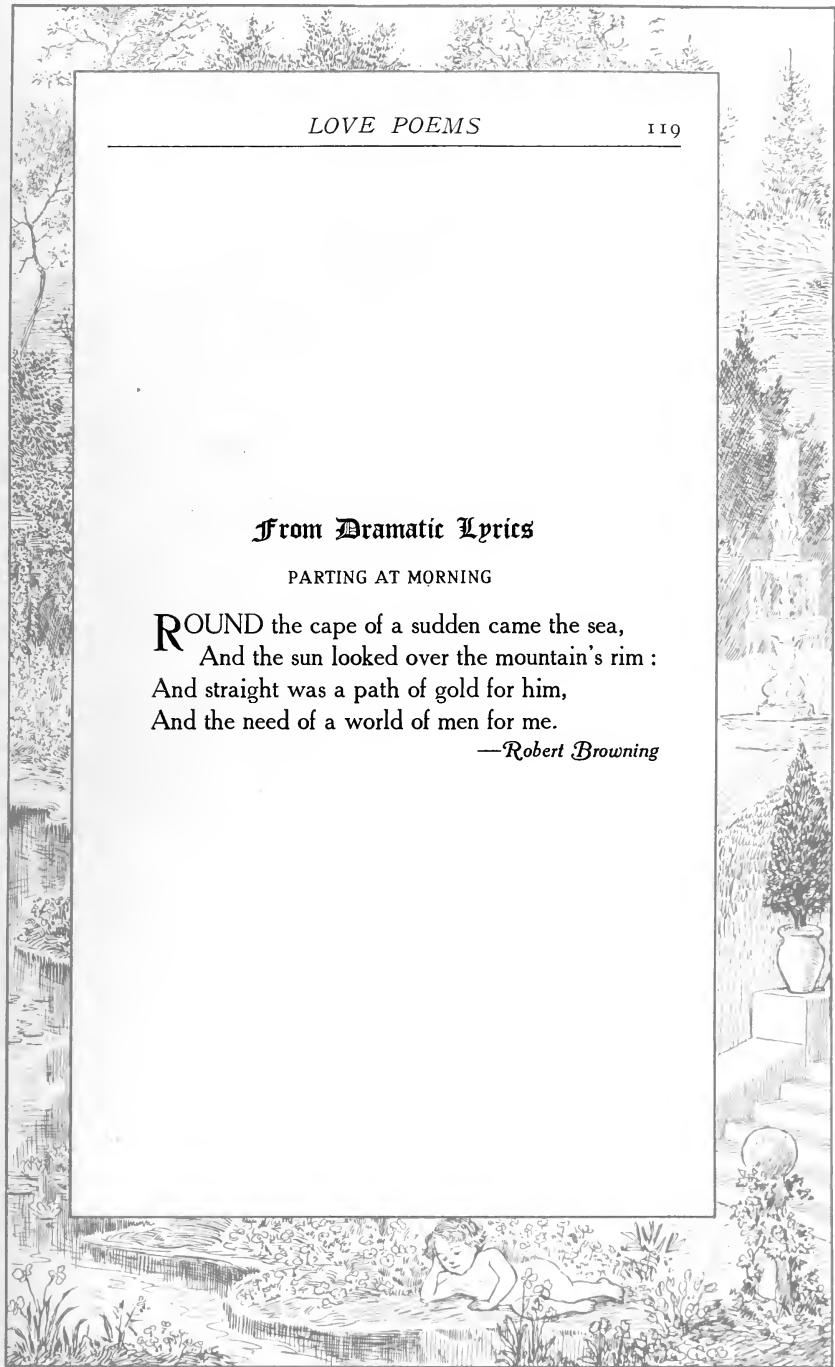
*“And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.”*

From Dramatic Lyrics

PARTING AT MORNING

ROUND the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim :
And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.

—*Robert Browning*





SPRING DREAMS

OTTO LINGNER

*"Such a blue inner light from her eyelids outbroke,
You looked at her silence and fancied she spoke."*

My Kate

I.

SHE was not as pretty as women I know,
And yet all your best made of sunshine and snow
Drop to shade, melt to nought in the long-trodden
ways,
While she's still remembered on warm and cold days—
My Kate.

II.

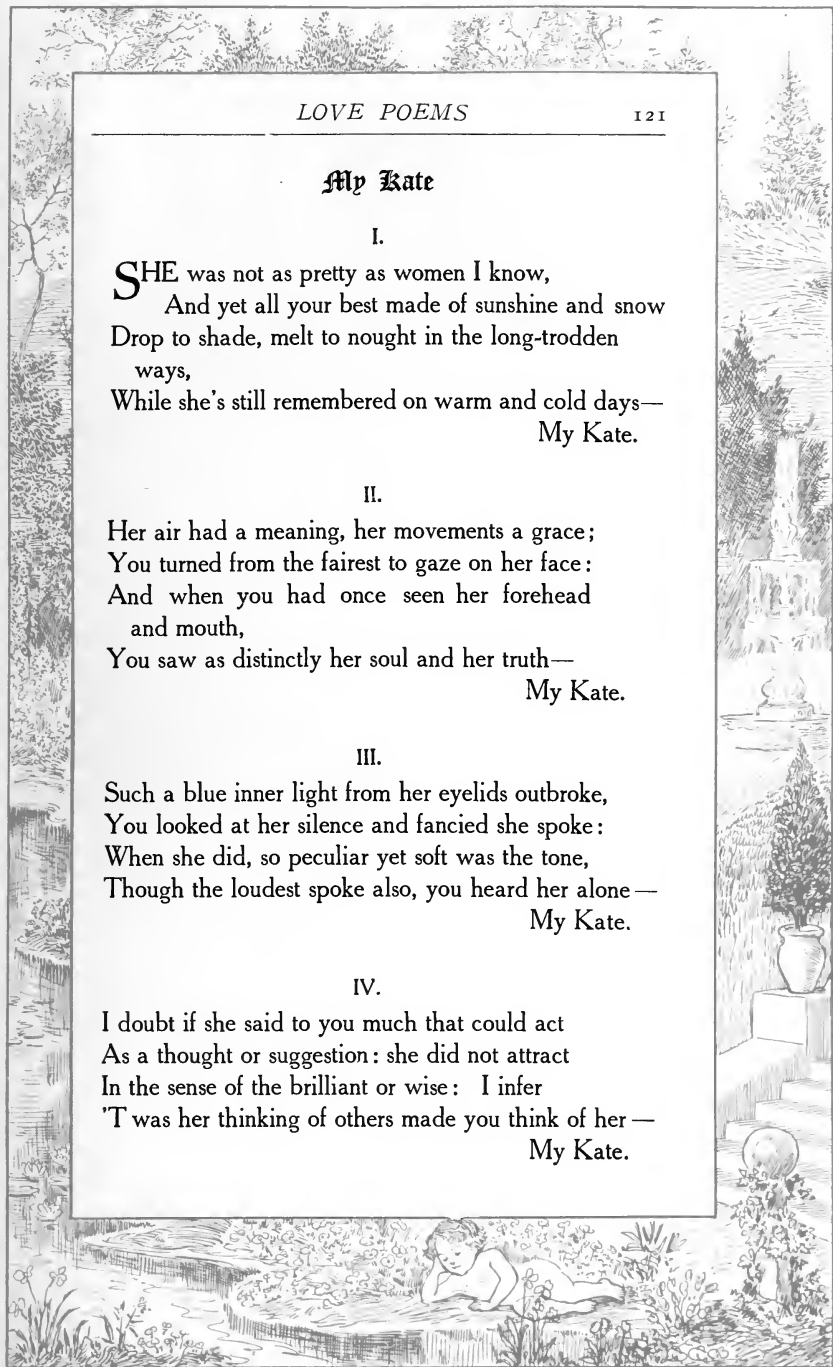
Her air had a meaning, her movements a grace;
You turned from the fairest to gaze on her face:
And when you had once seen her forehead
and mouth,
You saw as distinctly her soul and her truth—
My Kate.

III.

Such a blue inner light from her eyelids outbroke,
You looked at her silence and fancied she spoke:
When she did, so peculiar yet soft was the tone,
Though the loudest spoke also, you heard her alone—
My Kate.

IV.

I doubt if she said to you much that could act
As a thought or suggestion: she did not attract
In the sense of the brilliant or wise: I infer
'T was her thinking of others made you think of her—
My Kate.



V.

She never found fault with you, never implied
Your wrong by her right; and yet men at her side
Grew nobler, girls purer, as through the whole town
The children were gladder that pulled at her gown—
My Kate.

VI.

None knelt at her feet confessed lovers in thrall;
They knelt more to God than they used,—that
was all:
If you praised her as charming, some asked what you
meant,
But the charm of her presence was felt when she
went—

My Kate.

VII.

The weak and the gentle, the ribald and rude,
She took as she found them, and did them all good;
It always was so with her—see what you have!
She has made the grass greener even here . . .
with her grave—

My Kate.

VIII.

My dear one!—when thou wast alive with the rest,
I held thee the sweetest and loved thee the best:
And now thou art dead, shall I not take thy part
As thy smiles used to do for thyself, my sweet Heart—

My Kate?

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Loved Once

I.

I CLASSED, appraising once,
Earth's lamentable sounds,—the welladay,
The jarring yea and nay,
The fall of kisses on unanswering clay,
The sobbed farewell, the welcome mournfuller,—
But all did leaven the air
With a less bitter leaven of sure despair
Than these words—"I loved ONCE."

II.

And who saith "I loved ONCE"?
Not angels—whose clear eyes, love, love forsee,
Love, through eternity,
And by To Love do apprehend To Be.
Not God, called LOVE, His noble crown-
name casting,
A light too broad for blasting:
The great God, changing not from everlasting,
Saith never "I loved ONCE."

III.

Oh, never is "Loved ONCE"
Thy word, Thou Victim-Christ, misprized friend!
Thy cross and curse may rend,
But having loved Thou lovest to the end.
This is man's saying—man's: too weak to move
One spherèd star above,
Man desecrates the eternal God-word Love
By his No More, and Once.



IV.

How say ye "We loved once,"
Blasphemers? Is your earth not cold enow,
Mourners, without that snow?
Ah friends, and would ye wrong each other so?
And could ye say of some whose love is known,
Whose prayers have met your own,
Whose tears have fallen for you, whose smiles have
shone
So long,— "We loved them ONCE"?

V.

Could ye "We loved her once"
Say calm of me, sweet friends, when out of sight?
When hearts of better right
Stand in between me and your happy light?
Or when, as flowers kept too long in the shade,
Ye find my colors fade,
And all that is not love in me decayed?
Such words—Ye loved me ONCE!

VI.

Could ye "We loved her once"
Say cold of me when further put away
In earth's sepulchral clay,
When mute the lips which deprecate to-day?
Not so! not then—least then! When life is shriven
And death's full joy is given,—
Of those who sit and love you up in heaven
Say not "We loved them once."

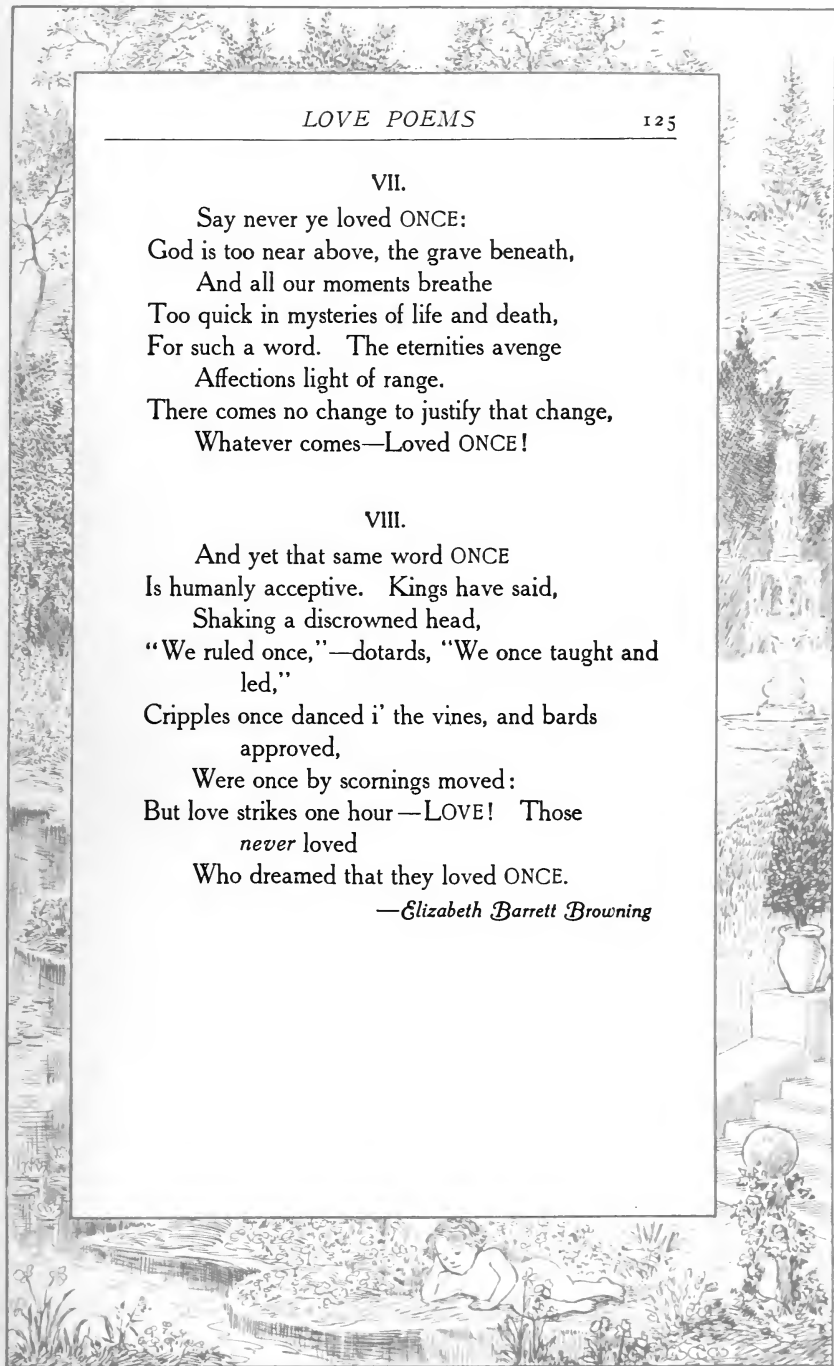
VII.

Say never ye loved ONCE:
God is too near above, the grave beneath,
And all our moments breathe
Too quick in mysteries of life and death,
For such a word. The eternities avenge
Affections light of range.
There comes no change to justify that change,
Whatever comes—Loved ONCE!

VIII.

And yet that same word ONCE
Is humanly acceptive. Kings have said,
Shaking a discrowned head,
“We ruled once,”—dotards, “We once taught and
led,”
Cripples once danced i' the vines, and bards
approved,
Were once by scornings moved:
But love strikes one hour—LOVE! Those
never loved
Who dreamed that they loved ONCE.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning





A LOVER'S BIRTHDAY GIFT

F. SOULACROIX

"What is she? Her human self,—no lower word will serve."

From Asolando: Fancies and Facts

POETICS

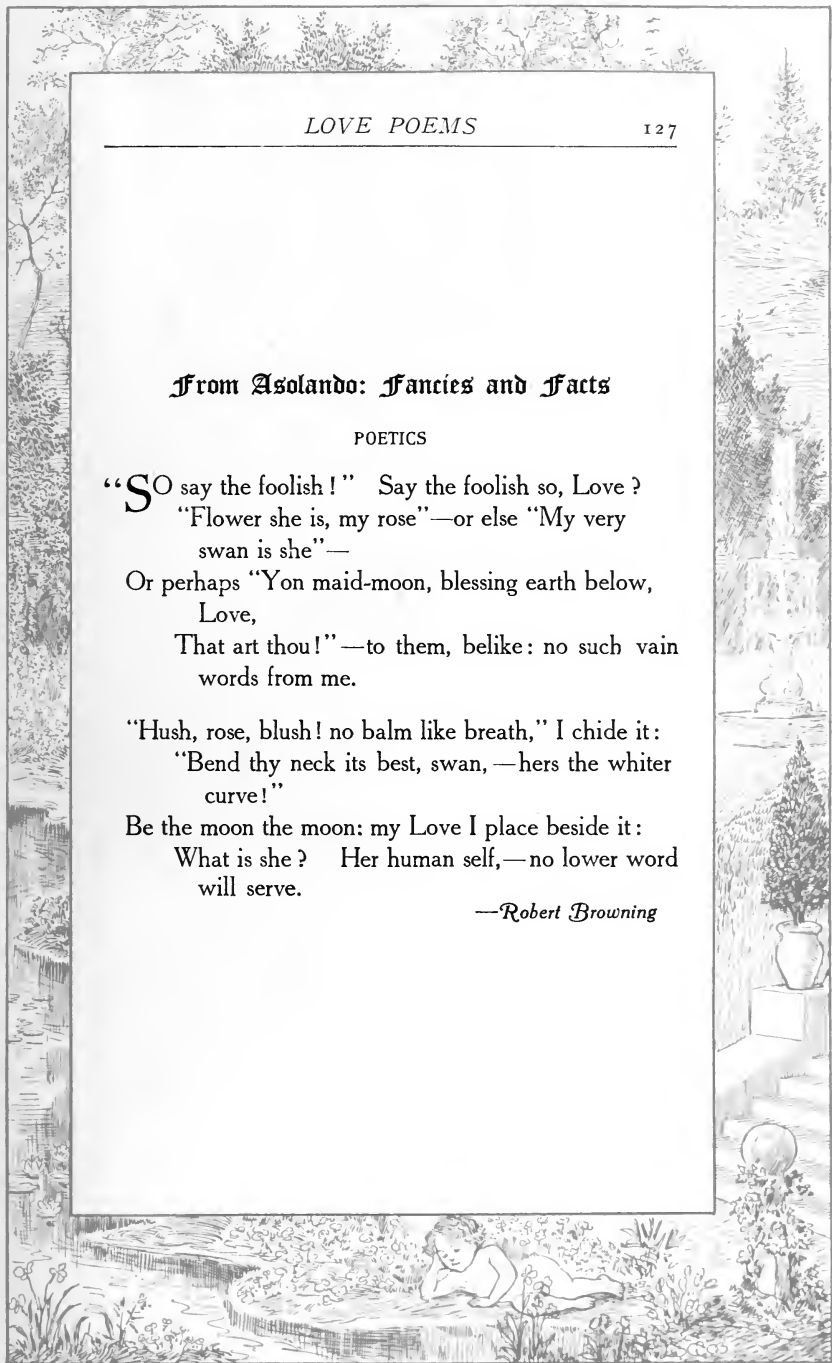
“SO say the foolish!” Say the foolish so, Love?
“Flower she is, my rose”—or else “My very
swan is she”—

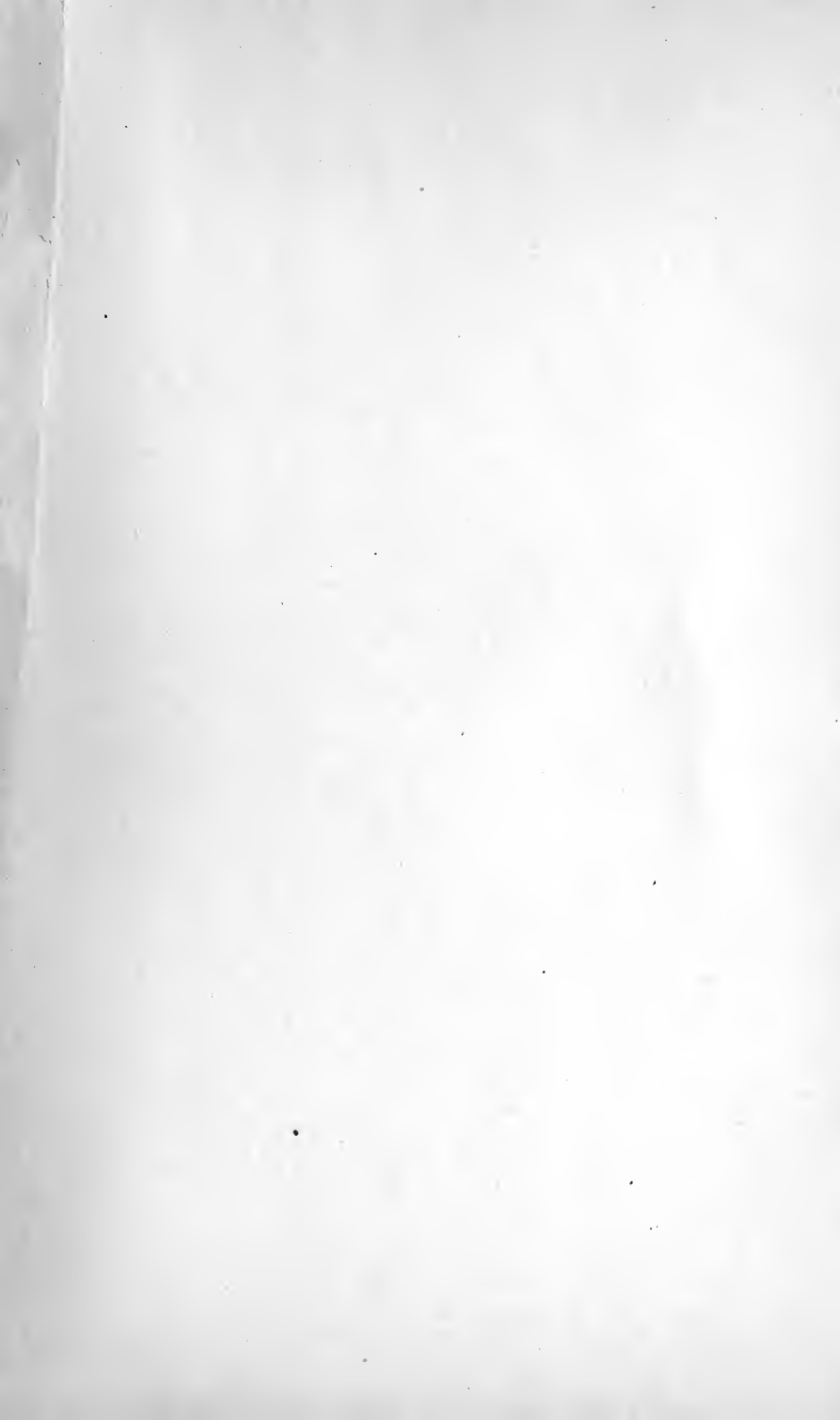
Or perhaps “Yon maid-moon, blessing earth below,
Love,
That art thou!”—to them, belike: no such vain
words from me.

“Hush, rose, blush! no balm like breath,” I chide it:
“Bend thy neck its best, swan,—hers the whiter
curve!”

Be the moon the moon: my Love I place beside it:
What is she? Her human self,—no lower word
will serve.

—Robert Browning







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